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FABLIAUX OR TALES,

ABRIDGED FROM FRENCH MANUSCRIPTS

OF THE

XIITH AND XIIITH CENTURIES

2495

BY M. LE GRAND,

SELECTED AND

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH VERSE,

BY THE LATE G. L. WAY, ESQ.

LL. h-21

WITH

A Preface, Notes, and Appendix,

BY THE LATE G. ELLIS, ESQ.

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A NEW EDITION, CORRECTED.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. RODWELL, (SUCCESSOR TO MR. FAULDER,)

NEW BOND STREET,

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SONNET TO G. E.

(TO WHOM THE TRANSLATOR IS INDEBTED FOR THE PREFACE AND MANY OF THE NOTES TO THIS VOLUME.)

THOU, gentle friend, hast spied me how I pac'd
Through strange delightful realms of Fairy-land,
And tangled arbours trimm'd with rustick hand,
And alleys green, for lack of tread grown waste:

Then be the labour thine, for thy command
Hath wray'd my homely deeds to nicer eyes,
These scenes of long past ages duly scann'd
To teach our courtly throng their brave device.

The mickle toil be thine, and thine the price;
So I may roam, as likes my wandering vein,
To other bowers nigh lost in time's disguise,
And muse of loyal knights' and ladies' pain;
And, as I search each desert dark recess,
Lament such change of fortune favourless.

G. L. W.

SONNET TO THE REV. H. T. P.

(ON RECEIVING FROM HIM SOME TRANSCRIPTS, &c. OF WELCH POETRY, SINCE INSERTED IN THE NOTES TO THIS VOLUME.)

HENRY, by nature's hand in blood allied,
By many a link of kindred fancy join'd,
Fair fall the hour that first thy youth confin'd
To Cambrian wilds by Usk's romantick side!

There (with a pastor's duty well combin'd,
Rude flocks among, that know none other lore,)
Love for the muse of Wales impell'd thy mind,
And to thy search unvail'd her bards of yore.

Now, led by thee, my ravish'd eyes explore
Great Arthur's deeds embalm'd in Merlin's song,
Ken how his worthies strive in conflict sore,
And save their rescued fame from sceptick's wrong:
Hence! chilling doubt!—sustained by fairy hand
*Still Arthur lives, to reign in Anglia's land!**

G. L. W.

* Alluding to the hexameter said to have been written on Arthur's tomb—

HIC IACET ARTHVRVS REX QVONDAM REXQVE FVTVRVS.

Or, as Lydgate gives it—

Hys Epitaphie recordeth so certeyne,
Here lieth King Arthur pt shall reigne agein.

PREFACE.

THE following Work is an attempt at a metrical translation of some Fabliaux, or French Tales, contained in the collection made by M. Le Grand, and first published in three volumes octavo in 1779; afterwards (in 1781) in five small volumes. The original compositions, of which this author has given us abridgments or extracts, being of the 12th and 13th centuries, are consequently anterior to our English historical ballads and metrical romances, of which they are probably the originals; and, being written in a language which at that period was common to France and England, may be considered as equally connected with the literary history of both countries.

A collection of Fabliaux was printed in 1756, from the manuscripts, in three small volumes, with a glossary to each; but even with this assistance they are so little intelligible to a modern Frenchman, that the work is said to be scarcely known, even among the learned, at Paris. From one of these (that of 'Gombert et les deux Clercs') Chaucer is supposed to have taken his Reve's tale: another has had the honour of being adopted by Diderot, but in the hands of that learned academician has lost all its original archness and simplicity, and under the quaint title of 'les Bijoux Indiscrets,' exhibits a most deplorable mixture of dullness and profligacy. This collection is mentioned here because three of the following fabliaux ('the Lay of the 'little Bird,' 'the Priest who had a Mother in spite of 'himself,' and 'the Lay of Aristotle') are to be found in it: these may be consulted as a proof of the fidelity with which M. Le Grand has executed his abridgments.

He seems indeed to be fully aware of the importance

of such fidelity. Works of fancy, written in remote ages, are the most authentick historical documents with respect to the manners and customs of the times in which they are composed. In compiling a chronicle of events, the monkish historians seem to have been only solicitous to record the progress or decay of religion, which they measured by the importance of the donations made to their respective monasteries, or to the church in general. It was solely by such donations that the ignorant laity could merit the honourable mention of the learned: their manners, amusements, or occupations, were considered as unworthy of notice, or were only noticed to be involved in one general proscription; and hence it has happened that whatever information we possess with respect to the dark ages has been principally gleaned by modern sagacity from the laws and other public records of the times. But, in composing works of imagination, the monk is forced to look beyond the boundaries of his cloister, and to describe what passes in the world; his facts are false, but

the manners he paints are true. Thus when Adam Davie (a poet of the 14th century cited by Mr. Warton) represents Pilate as challenging our Lord to single combat; or when, in Pierce Plowman's Vision (edit. 1550, fol. 98,) the person who pierced our Saviour's side is described as *a knight who came forth with a spear and jousted with Jesus*, we are very sure that the author has given to all his actors the opinions and habits that were generally prevalent amongst his cotemporaries. It was in consequence of such reflections as these that M. de Paulmy first set on foot the well-known 'Bibliotheque des Romans,' containing extracts from all the classes in his vast library. It was intended as an amusing and instructive supplement to the graver history of each century; and, had the compilers continued true to their principles, had they been guided by the elegant and discriminating taste of the Comte de Tressan, it would doubtless have proved one of the most useful and entertaining productions of modern literature.

What has been just premised will in a great measure explain the intentions of the present translator. The authors of the Cento Novelle Antiche, Boccace, Bandello, Chaucer, Gower, in short the writers of all Europe, have probably made use of the inventions of the elder fablers. They have borrowed their general outlines, which they have filled up with colours of their own, and have exercised their ingenuity in varying the drapery, in combining the groups, and in forming them into more regular and animated pictures. Le Grand has given his authors in their native simplicity, and the present translator has adhered to his original with the most scrupulous, and perhaps with a servile fidelity. In many places he has been even literally exact. From his anxiety to attain this object he has been induced to try an experiment, of the success of which he can only judge by the suffrages of his readers. Every one has observed that certain expressions become by habit appropriate to the modes of particular periods. Spenser and Sidney, who were familiar with the spirit of chi-

valry, and who described what they saw and felt, have transfused into their language the stateliness and courtesy of the gentle knights whom they painted; and a writer who should attempt to delineate the manners of the age in which they lived, would find it difficult to give life and spirit to his description without borrowing many of their expressions, for which no substitutes can be found in modern language, because the modes and customs to which they refer have long since grown obsolete. From the writers of this age therefore the translator has borrowed not only a variety of words, but, as far as he could, the general cast of their expression; and with a view to remedy any little obscurity that might arise from this practice, he has given a short glossary at the end of the work, to explain such words as may not be perfectly familiar to every reader. In short, he has endeavoured to adapt the colouring and costume of language to the manners he describes: to give an exact copy in miniature of the works of antiquated masters; not to rival or eclipse them by the

superiour brilliancy of his tints, or by the nicer artifice of his composition.

M. Le Grand has prefixed to his work a long and elaborate, but desultory preface, in which he discusses the relative merits of the *Trouveurs* and *Troubadours* (the northern and southern French poets), with a degree of prolixity which would appear intolerable in a translation; and employs the most violent invectives against the English nation, whom he taxes with envy and arrogance, for having presumed to bestow on their countryman King Arthur, that pre-eminence among the heroes of romance which justly belonged to Charlemagne. Of the remainder of his preface, part is allotted to a description of the variations that have taken place in French poetry; and part to an account of his materials, and of the difficulties he found in collating and digesting them. As none of these discussions were likely to interest in detail the readers of the following translations, it has been thought sufficient to preserve the principal

facts and observations with which they were interspersed.

With a view to render his work more generally useful, M. Le Grand has added to each fabliau a variety of notes, explanatory of the private life, manners, and customs of the Europeans during the 12th and 13th centuries. These the translator has preserved; but he has taken the liberty of abridging them very considerably, and of entirely omitting such as appeared too trivial, or related exclusively to French antiquity: he has also frequently referred his readers to English instead of French examples; and has occasionally introduced additions of his own. Notes, however, are necessarily unconnected, and, had M. Le Grand been less anxious to establish the pretensions of his countrymen to priority of romantick invention, he would probably have employed some part of his preface in sketching a general outline of the picture to which the separate parts might be referred, and particularly in tracing the rise

and progress of chivalry, that leading institution of the dark ages, and which had an influence so considerable on manners and literature. The subject indeed has been often treated at large, but such a work as this is addressed to unlearned readers, who expect, and have a right to find, a short and intelligible narrative of whatever is necessary to the explanation of the work before them. This therefore will be attempted by the translator in the remainder of this preface.

Every one knows that on the decline of the Roman power, whatever remains of literature had survived the long reign of bad taste and superstition, were destroyed by the variety of barbarous nations who broke into the several provinces; and that during the 5th, 6th, and 7th centuries, all the inhabitants of Europe were plunged in the darkest ignorance, from which they are supposed to have gradually emerged in consequence of their intercourse with the Arabians. That extraordinary people, whose religious zeal had prompted them to destroy

the library of Alexandria, soon repented of their work, and became as anxious for the acquisition of learning as for enlargement of dominion. About the beginning of the 8th century, at which time they had spread themselves through Egypt and along the whole northern coast of Africa, and were become masters of the richest provinces of Spain, they appear on a comparison with the western Europeans as a civilized and polished people. They were the inventors of arithmetick in its present form, of algebra, and of chemistry; were considerable proficients in medicine and astronomy, and renewed in the west the knowledge of the best Greek authors, and particularly of Aristotle. It appears certain that the Jews, who were the principal channels of our literary as well as commercial intercourse with the Arabians, had introduced many of the learned works of that people into Europe before the age of Charlemagne; but it does not seem to be perfectly ascertained whether their poetry or their fictions were known to our ancestors before the time of the Crusades. Some

criticks ascribe to the northern Scalds that system of fairy mythology which others attribute to the Arabians; while Mr. Warton contends, that as the Goths themselves appear to have emigrated from the shores of the Caspian, we are in either case to consider fairies and dragons as of Asiatick origin. It is for the reader to determine whether this genealogy of fiction be well authenticated. A belief in supernatural agents seems to have prevailed in every age and country, and monsters of all sorts have been created by fear and exaggeration. Every child has trembled at the hideous voracity of the cannibal Ogres or Ougres, yet there is no evidence that the real Ougres, who were the Hungarian soldiers in Attila's army, were in the habit of eating children. It seems as natural that a belief in fairies should have preceded our intercourse with the Arabians, as that giants should have been imagined before the discovery of Patagonia. The snake and the lizard apparently comprise the analysis of a dragon; and since Europeans are as capable as Asiaticks of being frightened by such rep-

tiles, they are probably not less likely to have furnished them with griping talons and wings as an excuse for their terror.

But whatever may be the extent of the advantages derived from an amicable intercourse with the Saracens, it is certain that their enmity effected a great change in the manners of Europe, by producing a complete revolution in the art of war; an event which could not be indifferent where every government reposed on a military basis. The cavalry of the Arabians, like that of their ancestors the Parthians, was extremely formidable; and the Franks, whose armies were composed solely of infantry, found it difficult to resist the attacks of so versatile an enemy, or even to derive any permanent advantage from success. The famous victory in 732 between Tours and Poictiers which gained to Charles the surname of Martel (the hammer), and in which he totally destroyed the Saracen camp, is said to have been as undecisive as it was bloody. From that period, therefore, he began to exert his utmost endeavour in

forming a body of cavaliers or *knights*, and this favourite project was prosecuted with no less ardour by his successors. In four-and-twenty years from the above date, the French cavalry was already become very numerous, since we are told that in 756 Pepin convoked the annual assembly of the states at Compiegne, not in the month of March as was the ancient custom, but in May; because, these assemblies being held immediately before they took the field, it was necessary that they should wait till their cavalry could be provided with a sufficiency of forage. The same attention to the cavalry continued through the succeeding reigns, and the infantry of Europe fell into entire disrepute till the beginning of the 16th century.

Some writers have attributed the institution of knighthood to Charles Martel, who, as they tell us, created thirteen knights after his victory near Poictiers: others, on the authority of Cassiodorus, carry it up to the time of Theodoric. We might with equal justice ascribe it to the Romans, who, from the beginning of their repub-

lick, had an equestrian order: but it is useless to look for the precise date of an institution which was matured and perfected gradually, as well by the vicissitudes of government, as by the increase of superstition.

We know that among the Germans, and probably among the other northern tribes, the first assumption of arms was attended with certain ceremonies; and it is likely that on the first formation of a body of cavalry, the candidates for a command in that favourite corps might receive their spurs, as the young Germans received their swords, with some degree of solemnity. But no particular oaths or religious obligations seem to have been imposed, nor indeed were they necessary, as military discipline and obedience were already secured by the constitution of the state. The Franks may be considered as an army quartered throughout Gaul: every soldier, in lieu of pay, had a portion of land originally allotted to him, by which tenure he had an interest in the preservation of the conquest. The sovereign, whose share was much more than sufficient for

his own maintenance, granted out, to those in whom he particularly confided, certain benefices or fiefs, and these being resumable at pleasure, sufficiently ensured the fidelity and obedience of those on whom they were conferred. It was in this way that the French monarchs seem to have made provision for their new body of knights or horsemen, and the allotment to each knight appears to have been considerable. The Normans are known to have copied pretty exactly the old French institutions, and under our Norman kings a knight's fee was of about £20 annual value, which is equal to a rent of £300 of our present money.

The reign of Charlemagne offers an event which is very lightly mentioned by historians, but forms a most important epocha in the legends of romance. In the year 778 the French monarch undertook an expedition into Spain, which terminated in the capture of Saragossa. In returning through the Pyrenees the rear of his army was attacked by the Gascons, and many of his principal officers, hastening to the place to rally the

troops, were slain. This was the famous defeat at the valley of Roncevaux, and here fell the peerless Rolland, the pretended cousin of Charlemagne and favourite hero of Boiardo and Ariosto, of whom however history only records that he commanded a body of troops on the frontier of Bretany. Near the place Charlemagne caused a chapel to be erected, having under it a large, strong, and beautiful vault, with thirty tombs of white stone, but without any inscriptions.

The succeeding kings of France did not inherit either the undivided empire, or the talents, of Charlemagne. By degrees, possession was supposed to confer a right to property of every kind; and fiefs, and even dignities, became hereditary. In the beginning of the 10th century, under the reign of Charles the Simple, the titles of Duke, Count, and Marquis, had entirely lost their original signification; and every baron, assuming whatever title he thought proper, became the uncontrolled and independent tyrant of his domains. Their country seats grew up into citadels, at all times occu-

pied by a garrison; and as the feudal securities of fealty and allegiance were found insufficient to secure obedience, the aid of superstition became necessary, and the knight or soldier was attached by the most solemn oaths and ceremonies to the person of his sovereign or superiour lord. Hence the monarchs of those times, though extremely formidable to foreign enemies, against whom they could direct the whole force of the nation, were often unsuccessful in their disputes with their own immediate vassals, in which they were able to employ those warriours only whom they might have attracted to their standard by their talents or their liberality. Such a state of things necessarily produced and gave importance to the order of knighthood; and as anarchy continued to increase till at length it became intolerable to all, as the state possessed no power of coercion, and even superstition, omnipotent as it was in many cases, was a feeble barrier against the excesses of that military age, it became necessary to form a code of honour, to supply the want of jurisprudence and morals; and

the security of the crown, the execution of justice, the protection of religion and the laws, and the redress of all injuries, particularly of those offered to women or orphans, were entrusted to the valour of the knights, and formed the sacred obligation which they contracted by their oath of admission into the order.

The reader who is accustomed to the regularity of civilized life cannot survey without astonishment the detail of confusion that prevailed in those times of feudal barbarism. The universal fondness for the pleasures of the chace, and the general contempt for agriculture, had converted a considerable part of Europe into forests; and the same solitude which gave an asylum to the beasts of the field, afforded security to large bands of robbers, who were generally sure of purchasing, by a participation of their plunder, the protection and assistance of the little tyrants in their neighbourhood. At every bridge, and on every road, enormous tolls were exacted; and passengers were often plundered by the Castellains through whose territories they passed.

Small armies, under the command of their condottieri, wandered over Europe, ready to engage in any service, and in the mean time pillaging all parties. These indeed were almost unknown in England, except during the troublesome reign of Stephen, who took into pay a troop of these land-pirates from the Ardennes, under the name of Brabanters; but our robbers were neither less numerous nor less insolent than those on the continent. Peter, king of Cyprus and Jerusalem, who visited England in 1363, was robbed on the highway. In 1316 two cardinals, with a large escort led by the Bishop of Durham and his brother Lord Beaumont, were attacked near Darlington, and the bishop and his brother were taken prisoners, and confined till they had paid their ransome. Even in the reign of the active and powerful Edward the First, the town of Boston was assaulted in 1285, during the time of the fair, and completely pillaged by a band of robbers. The wealth, power, and abilities of our first Norman kings, enabled them to form a strong government in England, when

other countries were in a state of anarchy: but the preceding examples shew what was the state of the rest of Europe at an earlier period. Anarchy was the universal evil, and knighthood was the remedy opposed to it: we are even told by Bettinelli (Risorgimento d'Italia, part 2d, page 259, note) that knights were sometimes created by republics, and swore fealty to the state as their sovereign.

It is evident that the performance of the many and hazardous duties imposed on the candidates for knighthood required an uncommon degree of valour, strength, and dexterity. Accordingly their education was long and severe: at seven years of age the noble children were usually removed from their father's house to the court or castle of their future patron, and placed under the care of a governor, who taught them the first articles of religion, respect and reverence to their lords and superiours, and initiated them in the ceremonies of a court. They were called *pages*, *valets*, or *varlets*, and their office was to carve, to wait at table, and to per-

form other menial services which were not then considered as humiliating. At their leisure hours they learnt to dance and play on the harp; were instructed in the *mysteries of woods and rivers*, that is to say, in hunting, falconry, and fishing; and in wrestling, tilting with spears, and performing other military exercises on horseback. At fourteen, the page became an esquire, and began a course of severer and more laborious exercises. To vault on a horse in heavy armour, to run, to scale walls, and spring over ditches under the same incumbrance, to wrestle, to wield the battle-axe for a length of time without raising the visor or taking breath, to perform with grace all the evolutions of the manage, and to rehearse the various labours of a real battle, were necessary preliminaries to the reception of knighthood, which was usually conferred at twenty-one years of age, when education was supposed to be completed. In the mean time, beside a variety of other occupations, the esquires, whose particular charge it was to do the *honours of the court*, were no less assiduously engaged

in acquiring all those refinements of civility, which formed what was in that age called *courtesy*, the distinctive character of noble birth. The same castle in which these candidates for knighthood received their education, was usually thronged with young persons of the other sex, and the page was encouraged at a very early period to select some lady of the court as the mistress of his heart, to whom he was taught to refer all his sentiments, words, and actions. Thus the strongest passion of the human breast was so directed as to exert all its witcheries in the cause of virtue. The service of his mistress was the glory and occupation of a knight: her image had taken root in his heart amidst the fairy scenes of childhood, and was blended with every recollection of that age of innocence; and her caresses, bestowed at once by affection and gratitude, were held out as the recompence of his well-directed valour. Mahomet was unable to find in Asiatick manners so powerful a source of enthusiasm.

To the possession of all that adorns and sweetens life

religion added the promise of pure and unceasing happiness hereafter. The holy wars broke out and produced the golden age of chivalry; and the order of knighthood, endowed with all the sanctity and religious awe that attended the priesthood, became an object of ambition to the greatest sovereigns.

At a time when chivalry excited universal admiration, and when all the efforts of that chivalry were directed against the enemies of religion, it was natural that literature should receive the same impulsion, and that history and fable should be ransacked to furnish examples of courage and piety that might excite increased emulation. Arthur and Charlemagne were the two heroes selected for this purpose. Arthur's pretensions were, that he was a Christian, and certainly a brave, though not always a successful warriour: he had withstood with great resolution the arms of the infidels, that is to say of the Saxons, and his memory was held in the highest estimation by his countrymen the Britons, who carried with them into Wales, and into the kindred

country of Armorica or Bretany, the memory of his exploits, which their national vanity insensibly exaggerated, till the little Prince of the Silures (South Wales including Herefordshire) was magnified into the conqueror of England, of Gaul, and of the greater part of Europe. When a hero becomes the popular theme of poetical composition, he will soon be adorned with the aggregate merits of many cotemporary warriours; and it is probable that Arthur inherited every unclaimed panegyrick that was to be found in the fragments of Welsh poetry. His genealogy was gradually carried up to an imaginary Brutus, and to the period of the Trojan war; and a sort of chronicle was composed in the Welsh or Armorican language, which, under the pompous title of the History of the Kings of Britain, was brought over from Bretany about the year 1100, by Gualter or Walter Mapes, Archdeacon of Oxford, and communicated to Geoffrey of Monmouth, who translated it into Latin, though not without many additions and alterations. From Latin it was translated into French by

Wistace or Eustace, in the year 1155, under the title of 'Brut d'Angleterre;' was continued by Robert Wace (who, after all, was also very probably the genuine Wistace, see Tyrwhitt's Essay on Chaucer, note 47), chaplain to our Henry the Second, and canon of Bayeux in 1160; under the title of 'Roman de Rou;' rendered into Saxon by Layamon; and at last exhibited in English verse by Robert of Gloucester, and by Robert Manning otherwise called Robert de Brunne, about the beginning of the 14th century.

As to Charlemagne, though his real merits were sufficient to secure his immortality, it was impossible that his *holy wars* against the Saracens should not become a favourite topick for fiction. Accordingly the fabulous history of these wars was written, probably towards the close of the 11th century, by a monk, who thinking it would add dignity to his work to embellish it with a cotemporary name, boldly ascribed it to Turpin, who was Archbishop of Rheims about the year 773. This is the book so frequently quoted by Ariosto.

These fabulous chronicles, however, were for a while imprisoned in languages of local only, or of professional, access. Both Turpin and Geoffrey might indeed be studied by ecclesiasticks, the sole Latin scholars of those times; and Geoffrey's British original would contribute to the gratification of Welshmen; but neither could become extensively popular till translated into some tongue of general and familiar circulation. The Anglo-Saxon was at this time used only by a conquered and enslaved nation: the Spanish and Italian languages were not yet formed; the French alone was spoken or understood by the nobility in the greatest part of Europe, and therefore was a proper vehicle for the new mode of composition.

The French language was divided into two dialects, both of which bore the name of *Romane* or *Romance*, because each was formed on the basis of the Latin; the northern being adulterated by a mixture of Frankish and Norman words, and the southern by those of the Ostrogoths, Visigoths, and Alani. The river Loire

was their common boundary. In the provinces to the south of that river, the affirmative *yes* was expressed by the word *oc*, in the north it was called *oil* (oui), and hence Dante has named the southern language *langue d'oc*, and the northern *langue d'oil*. The latter, which was carried into England, Sicily, &c. by the Normans, and is the origin of the present French, may be called *French Romane;* and the former *Provençal* or *Provencial Romane*, because it was spoken by the subjects of Raimond Count of Provence, who were known in the European armies during the Crusades by the general name of Provençals or Provencials.

These dialects were soon distinguished by very opposite characters. A soft and enervating climate, a spirit of commerce encouraged by an easy communication with other maritime nations, the influx of wealth, and a more settled government, may have tended to polish and soften the diction of the Provencials, whose poets, under the name of Troubadours, were the masters of the Italians, and particularly of Petrarch. Their fa-

vourite compositions were *Sirventes*, (satirical pieces), love-songs, and *tensons*, which last may be considered as *pleas for the courts of love*. The reader knows that, in the times of chivalry, passion was sublimed into a science, and that the conduct of young lovers, instead of being abandoned to the blind guidance of instinct, was subjected to a regular code of amorous jurisprudence. Every difficult and delicate question was discussed in the *courts of love* with the greatest solemnity, and with all the abstractions of metaphysical refinement; and it is probable that the disputes on these subjects would have produced as many heresies in love as in religion, but that the judgment-seat in the tribunals was filled by ladies, whose decision was very properly admitted to be final and absolute. It should seem that the Provencials were so completely absorbed in these abstract speculations, as to neglect and despise the composition of fabulous histories, only four of which are attributed to the Troubadours, and even these are rather legends of devotion than of chivalry.

On this ground M. Le Grand contends that these boasted *inventors* notwithstanding their proficiency in the *gai saber* (gay science) have discovered very little gaiety or invention. But this is much too hasty a decision. The Troubadours were highly admired by their cotemporaries; and candour requires that we should pay much deference to their judgment. The manners they painted seem extraordinary, but they were real. The passion with which Laura inspired their imitator Petrarch appears to us to be neither love nor friendship, nor jest nor earnest: but it is surely less strange than that of the Troubadour Geoffrey Rudel for the Countess of Tripoli, whom he had never seen. "He "became (says Mr. Warton) enamoured from imagi- "nation; embarked for Tripoly; fell sick in the voyage "through the fever of expectation; and was brought "on shore at Tripoly half expiring. The Countess, "having received the news of the arrival of this gallant "stranger, hastened to the shore, and took him by the "hand; he opened his eyes, and at once overpowered

"by his disease and her kindness, had just time to say "inarticulately, that *having seen her he died satisfied.* "The Countess made him a most splendid funeral, and "erected to his memory a tomb of porphyry, inscribed "with an epitaph in Arabian verse. She commanded "his sonnets to be richly copied and illuminated with "letters of gold; was seized with a profound melan- "choly, and turned nun." Poets of this description cannot be judged by ordinary rules; and a lover who fairly and honestly dies for the charms of an imaginary mistress, must be permitted to express in his own way such sensations as common language was certainly never intended to describe. In defence of the monotony of their pastoral poetry it may be observed, that a pastoral can only subsist by the charms of harmonious numbers and picturesque diction; merits which cannot be properly estimated by those who view it through the medium of a translation. These metaphorical flowers are of all flowers the most tender, and the least capable of being transplanted without losing their native freshness

and fragrance. Amorous and despairing shepherds must not be compared with the knights and fairies of Ariosto: these are robust beings calculated for every soil and climate, and so vivacious that (as Spenser has shewn us) they can still please, though stiffened and congealed by the chilling influence of allegory.

But whatever may be the merit of the Troubadours, M. Le Grand is apparently justified in contending that their language was by no means so generally diffused, nor so well calculated to give popularity and celebrity to the fabulous heroes, as the French Romane. This, which had begun to be fashionable in England before the Conquest, became, after that event, the only language used at the court of London; it was familiarly known at Naples, Sicily, and Florence, at Constantinople, and in the greater part of Greece, and was established by the Crusaders in their kingdoms of Cyprus and Jerusalem: and, as the various conquests of the Normans, and the enthusiastick valour of that extraordinary people, had familiarized the minds of men with

the most marvellous events; the French writers eagerly seized the fabulous legends of Arthur and Charlemagne, translated them into the vulgar tongue, and soon produced a variety of imitations. Hercules, Theseus, Jason, and the other fabulous heroes of Greece, are supposed to have distinguished themselves nearly in the same manner as our knights-errant, by destroying monsters and giants, and succouring the oppressed. Hector, and his brother-warriours, whose exploits were less marvellous, were however great favourites in the middle ages, because it was become fashionable among the European nations to claim their descent from Troy, after the example of Rome. Alexander the Great enjoyed among the Asiaticks the same sort of reputation as Orlando possessed in Europe. Many or all of these heroes therefore, being enlisted, as occasion might require, into the order of knighthood, and perhaps, by the help of a few anachronisms, introduced into the company of each other, were celebrated by the Trouveurs in their legends; and, together with the stories of

Renaud de Montauban, Ogier le Danois, the imaginary families of Amadis and others, Richard Cœur de Lion and the heroes of the Crusades, composed by degrees that formidable body of marvellous histories which, from the dialect in which the most ancient of them were written, were called *Romances*.

Though the early metrical compositions were upon the whole much shorter than the prose histories into which they were dilated during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, they were still so long that only extracts from them could conveniently be repeated at the festivals of the barons, or even retained by the minstrels, whose office it was to declaim them. In the pure ages of chivalry it is well known that the art of reading formed no part of a knight's accomplishments; the learned and unlearned parts of mankind were completely separated, and though the former did not always possess the knowledge to which they pretended, the latter were perfectly sincere in their professions of igno-

rance. And as the whole body of knights could not be constantly employed in war, nor in quest of adventures, nor in tournaments, nor even in the amusements of the chace; and as no men could be less patient under the listlessness attendant on inactivity; the Trouveurs or poets, (or, to adopt an old English expression, the *makers,*) together with their attendant minstrels, who were instructed in musick and the art of declamation, were very necessary to the festivity of a baron's table. In earlier times they had probably composed and taught to their heroes those warlike songs which even before the age of Charlemagne formed the delight of a military nobility. By degrees they introduced greater diversity into their compositions, and formed *dits* (ditties or moral songs), *ballads, complaints, roundelays,* and *virelays,* of which there were many varieties, and lastly *fabliaux* and *lays,* which perhaps only differed from each other by some peculiarity in their musical accompaniments. Of these tales, some appear

to have been founded on domestick stories or national traditions, and others were perhaps imported after the Crusades from Greece or Arabia. Some were romances in miniature, filled with fairies, dwarfs, giants, monsters, and tournaments; of which we have an example in the tale of 'The Mule without a Bridle;' some were tales of love and gallantry, and some of devotion. The only object of the poet was to amuse his audience, and he attained his object either by reciting the lives of saints, or the wonders of chivalry, or the scandalous adventures of the neighbourhood.

It is natural that hearers so little accustomed to the artifice of composition should not be very fastidious critiçks; but in perusing the original fabliaux it is impossible to repress our astonishment at the indelicate and gross language to which our ancestors of both sexes appear to have listened without the least scruple or emotion. It is true, that opinions respecting decorum may vary considerably in different ages, without

indicating a correspondent alteration in morals. 'In a play or mystery of the Old and New Testament acted at Chester in 1327, Adam and Eve (says Mr. Warton) were both exhibited on the stage naked, and conversing about their nakedness: this very pertinently introduces the next scene, in which they have coverings of fig-leaves. This extraordinary spectacle was beheld by a numerous assembly of both sexes with great composure: they had the authority of Scripture for such a representation, and they gave matters just as they found them in the third chapter of Genesis.' Such spectacles, however, may indicate the simplicity rather than the libertinism of the age in which they were exhibited; and it is possible that the necessity of veiling those living statues may have been suggested by the irritable imagination of prudery, rather than by any alarms they occasioned to artless and unsuspecting innocence. The same excuse may apply to the grossness of antiquated language. The distinction between mo-

desty of thought, and decency which resides in the expression, is a modern refinement; a compromise between chastity and seduction, which stipulates not the exclusion, but only the disguise of licenticusness; and may perhaps be a proof of a purer taste, but is no evidence of a very severe and rigid morality. Unfortunately, however, it is not the language only, but the whole tendency of many of the fabliaux, which is highly reprehensible; and indeed from almost all the literary productions of those simple ages it appears, that if continence was highly venerated, it was partly on account of its extreme scarcity. Queen Guenever is a well-known, but by no means a solitary instance of female frailty; and from the general conduct of the heroines of romance, we should almost be led to suspect, that passing their lives in the constant dread of violation, they would have thought themselves criminally prodigal of their resources had they employed against a lover those means of defence which might at

every moment become necessary for their resisting an unwelcome and brutal ravisher. M. Le Grand observes with great surprise, that even in *le Castoiement* (a work on education), and in the Chevalier de la Tour's *Instructions to his Daughters*, the tales by which their precepts are exemplified are not more edifying than the most licentious productions of the Trouveurs: and this too at a time when ladies were the supreme arbiters of taste, and guardians of national manners.

It is evident, however, that this evil was one of the many mischiefs resulting from anarchy, a monster, which (like the Blatant Beast in Spenser) neither the arts of female elegance nor the arms of chivalry could soften or subdue. The laws were silent or impotent; the professors of religion were either themselves ignorant, or being immersed in the refinements of scholastick learning, and in disputes about the dogmas of Christianity, neglected to inculcate the plain and prac-

tical code of Christian morality, whose silent but certain influence could alone have meliorated the perversity of general habits. From the want of this principle of attraction to modify the impulse of the passions, and to retain the different classes of society in their proper orbits, the many examples of exalted virtue which those ages really produced, were regarded only as brilliant eccentricities of conduct: they appeared like the comets of the system, they were gazed at with surprise, but their influence was insensible.

From the account that has been given of the fabliaux, it is evident that they were perfectly unfit to be presented in their original state to modern readers. Some indeed were so faulty, that M. Le Grand was constrained to suppress them as quite incorrigible: almost all required considerable omissions; and the compression of their style, which was pretty universally lax and diffuse. He trusted, however, that without altering their character, these might still be rendered worthy of the

publick favour; and the present translator, by restoring to them metrical form and antiquated language, has endeavoured to give them the graces of originality. The oblivion to which they have been so long condemned, was produced rather by the vicissitudes of fashion than by their own demerits; they were eclipsed by the more brilliant fictions of chivalry, and these were in their turn forgotten when the disuse of tournaments consigned the nobility of Europe to repose and indolence. During this stagnation of amusement arose the *heroick romances*, the Cassandras and Clelias, which breathe tedium and torpor in every page, and which instead of restless knights constantly pursuing a mistress or fighting a rival, present to us respectful but languid lovers, lamenting the rigours of a sex who were forced to regret even the enterprising petulance of their former admirers, when they found the dangers of a siege exchanged for the listless monotony of a blockade. These were followed by translations and imitations of Arabian

and other Asiatick fictions, by fairy tales, by philosophical romances, and lastly by novels. With these more finished productions of a polished age it is not the intentton of the translator to compare his Fabliaux: he offers them as the first rude essays in a species of composition which the pedantry of criticism has vainly attempted to discredit, which has employed the pens of a Richardson and a Fielding, and in which many female writers of the present day have successfully blended the allurements of fiction with much useful instruction and pure morality.

ADVERTISEMENT.

In this new Edition of Mr. Way's Fabliaux are inserted all the corrections which he had transcribed into his own printed copy.

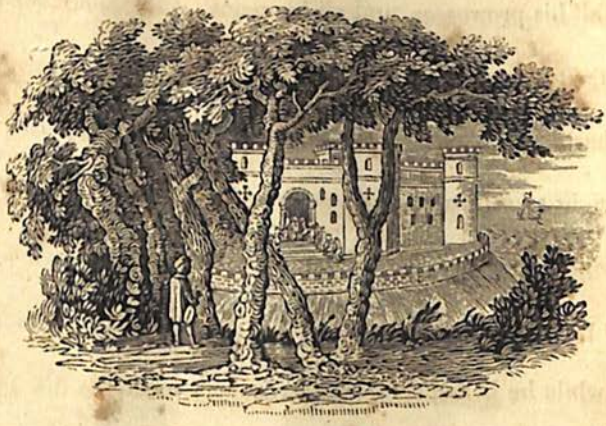
These are neither numerous nor important; but the present Editor thinks it necessary to notice their existence, lest the detection of any variations from the original text should fix on him the suspicion of carelessness in the humble task, which his respect for his Father's memory has alone induced him to undertake.

FABLIAUX OR TALES,

OF THE

TWELFTH AND THIRTEENTH CENTURIES.

Aucassin and Nicolette.



AUCASSIN AND NICOLETTE.

WHAT wight is he that fain would now be told
Of rare adventures fallen in days of old?—
Sweet verse I sing, and goodly deeds I tell,
Of a young pair that lov'd each other well:
Young were they both, in love their hearts were met,
Their names were Aucassin and Nicolette.
All that the youth assay'd, by day or night,
For his sweet maid, with skin like lily white,

And all his prowesses, and all his pains,
The fruitful compass of my tale contains.
So chaste, so cheerful, their love's strain doth flow,
No wight so sad but this must wake from wo;
No wight, though stretch'd upon his bed he lie,
With pain distraught, or worn with malady,
But, while he hears, shall quick recovery meet,
So touching is the tale, so passing sweet.
Ten livelong years were past since baleful war
Had scourg'd the afflicted lands of waste Beaucaire;
And to the city gates, the last defence,
In arms the stern Count Bongars of Valence
Led on his host: each rising sun beheld
An hundred knights well marshall'd in the field:
These, with a thousand of mix'd foot and horse,
Stretch'd all around with unresisted force,
Wide o'er the ravag'd plains their fury pour'd,
And smote the offenceless vassals with the sword;

While, bow'd with years, Count Garins' faltering might
Shrunk from the storm of foes, and shunn'd the fight.
One son he had, and Aucassin his name,
Of power to vindicate his father's fame;
For large of size he was, his limbs well set,
Stout manliness with wondrous beauty met:
But will was wanting. Love, whom all obey,
Rul'd o'er his heart with undivided sway;
Tourneys he heeded not, nor war's emprize,
His soul's desire one lovely maid supplies.
Full many a time his sire, with language kind,
And his fond mother, sought to move his mind:
'Arm, dearest son!' they cried, 'ascend thy steed,
'And bear strong succour in this hour of need:
'Haste to our scatter'd vassals, head their host,
'And stay these spoilers ere our all be lost;
'Might to his men a warring chieftain gives;
'So shall they guard their homes, their wealth, their lives.'

'My sire!' the love-lost youth would answer still,
'Thou know'st already my unshaken will.
'May heaven still mar my hopes, reject my prayer,
'If girded sword these limbs be seen to bear,
'If steed be cross'd, if earthly power incite
'This hand to join in tourney or in fight,
'Ere to my arms my mistress thou impart;
'Sweet Nicolette! the mistress of my heart!'
'Fair son of mine!' rejoin'd the mournful sire,
'Ne'er may I yield to such uncouth desire:
'High blood is thine, and lineage undefil'd;
'She, bought of Saracens, a captive child:
'My vassal, Viscount of Beaucaire, who paid
'The paltry purchase of this paynim maid,
'Who when he caus'd her since to be baptiz'd
'Stood sponsor too, hath well her weal aviz'd,
'And means fit spousal with some sturdy hind;
'And the plough's toil their needful food shall find.

'Thou, if the marriage state be deem'd so bless'd,

'To counts, to kings, may'st bear thy just request;

'View France throughout; there seek thy nuptial joys;

'There lives no lord so proud to slight thy choice:

'Where-e'er we sue, the sire, whoe'er he be,

'Will hold him honour'd in a son like thee.'

'Ah, father mine!' young Aucassin replied,

'Where through the world's wide waste may be descried

'County or realm, that were not well appay'd

'If Nicolette reign'd there, my lovely maid!'

The sire, unmov'd, his former word maintain'd,

And the good Countess pray'd, and threaten'd, and complain'd;

But prayers or threatenings answer none might meet

Save this alone—'My Nicolette so sweet!

'So simply beautiful! so courtly kind!

'She ravishes my heart, she fills my mind.

'So sweet my Nicolette!—if life abide,

'Her love I needs must win, and she shall be my bride.'

The pensive sire, who now despair'd to move
His son's fix'd purpose to prevail in love,
His vassal Viscount that same hour assay'd,
And call'd quick exile down upon the maid.
Sway'd by his fears, howe'er he blam'd the deed,
The yielding vassal the hard doom decreed,
And vow'd quick exile to some distant shore,
So strange, her name should ne'er be heard of more.
Yet for his heart belied his harsher tongue,
And the poor child was innocent and young,
And for he lov'd her, and abhorr'd the lot
Of punishment should fall where guilt was not;
He meant some place, from sight of man retir'd,
Should stead that banishment his lord requir'd.
In the top story of his palace tower
The builder had devis'd one lonely bower;
Its single window, small, and scant of light,
O'erlook'd a garden fair, that cheer'd the gazer's sight:

To this small room the Viscount turn'd his mind,
Here well he thought the maid might be confin'd:
Hard-by abundant stores his kindness plac'd
Of all things needful for frail nature's waste;
Then to a matron, grave with length of days,
He gave the child, with charge to answer for her ways.

Fair flaxen locks sweet Nicolette did grace,
Fair crisped locks, sweet symmetry of face;
Small were her teeth, and delicately white,
And her blue eyes with laughing lustre bright;
Then for her slender waist, it might be spann'd,
E'en with the narrow circle of your hand;
And her clear skin such freshness did adorn,
'Twas like the rosebud at the peep of morn;
And of a comely smallness, and of hue
More red than summer's cherries ripening new,
Were her twain lips; while through her robe below
Two dainty apples rose, but whiter than the snow:

Such was her form: to sum up all in one,
Maiden so sweet your eyes saw never none.
Soon as her doom this hapless orphan spied,
To the small casement with quick step she hied,
And o'er the garden cast her wishful sight,
All gay with flowers it seem'd, a garden of delight;
On every spray the merry birds did sing,
And hail'd the season's prime with fluttering wing:
'Ah! wo is me!' she cried, 'in doleful cheer;
'Lo here I bide! for ever prison'd here!—
'Sweet love! sweet Aucassin! for thee confin'd!
'For that dear love which fills our mutual mind!—
'Yet shall their deeds ne'er shake my constant will,
'For I am true of heart, and bent to love thee still.'
The folk meanwhile, who all, though none knew where,
Saw Nicolette was absent from Beaucaire,
Whene'er they met, their various thoughts compar'd,
And argued how perchance the maid had far'd.

Some ween'd her fled, while others rumour'd rife
Count Garins sure had practis'd on her life:
I wot not if one single heart were glad,
Poor Aucassin's, past doubt, was hopeless sad;
Soon to the Viscount, wo-begone, he hied,
And claim'd his beauteous maid, his plighted bride.
'All that I lov'd!' he cried with piteous tone,
'My world's best dearest treasure!—she is gone!
'Hast thou bereft me thus?—my parting breath
'Calls out on thee, the authour of my death.'
Awhile the Viscount hop'd, and vainly strove
To waken shame for such inglorious love:
But, while he spake, the youth's enkindled eye
Flash'd with such ire, and told such hatred nigh,
That, sway'd by prudence, sadly thus in brief
He shew'd the harsh commandment of his chief:
'Young friend!' he said, 'give bootless passion o'er:
'Thine eyes must gaze on Nicolette no more.

'Be resolute, and wisely bear thy lot,
'That thy sire deem the luckless maid forgot;
'Else, uncontroll'd in wrath, too sure I read
'Some direful ruin bursting on thy head;
'E'en on myself perchance the storm will fall,
'And thy dear damsel!—thou the cause of all!
'Wrought up to madness, thine imperious sire
'May doom us both to dreadful death by fire.'
Heart-struck, the stripling heard; then wildly turn'd
Swift to his home, and thus in secret mourn'd:
'Sweet Nicolette!' he cried, 'my mild, my meek!
'So sweet whene'er you smile, whene'er you speak;
'So sweet to kiss, and to embrace so sweet;
'Own sister mine—we never more may meet!
'Here, all forlorn, bide I:—here yet I breathe:—
'Soon, soon I trust, to quench despair in death!'
While thus young Aucassin, of grief the prey,
Wept all the vigour of his life away,

The stout Count Bongars, bent to end the war,
Girt, strait and sore, the castle of Beaucaire;
To each brave knight had now assign'd his post,
And to the storm led on his dreadless host.
Within too, knights and squires, a gallant band,
Throng'd round the gates and walls were seen to stand;
Bold burghers, mounted on the embattled towers,
Hurl'd sharpen'd stakes, and shot down arrowy showers;
Yet lack'd there still some chief's approved might
To animate their deeds, and rule the fight.

Dismay'd, Count Garins hasten'd to his son;
'Base wretch!' he cried, 'e'en now the gates are won,
'And thou sitt'st tamely here! to see thy land
'Waste all and captiv'd by the foeman's hand?—
'These castle walls—this last resource to see
'Storm'd all and lost?—then what remains to thee?—
'Rouse, dearest son, thy warriour steed ascend,
'Thy vassals cheer, thy heritage defend:

'E'en though thy craven soul refuse to fight,
'Thy presence shall confirm thy followers' might;
'On to the foe the elated bands will throng,
'And bear resistless victory along.'
'My sire,' young Aucassin return'd in haste,
'Spare vain remonstrance, for my word is past.
'Heaven instant punish me, if e'er I go,
'Or change one stroke in combat with a foe,
'Till to my arms thou Nicolette impart,
'Sweet Nicolette! the mistress of my heart!'
'Son,' quoth the Count, 'I liefer far desire
'To see all lost:'—he spoke, and turn'd in ire.
'Yet stay, yet stay!' young Aucassin rejoin'd,
'And let this proffer please my father's mind:
'E'en now in arms I seek the mortal strife,
'So thou declare, should heaven preserve my life,
'Back when I speed victorious from the war
'These eyes shall once again behold my fair;

'My fair sweet Nicolette, my heart's delight,
'Once, only once, again shall bless my sight;
'Hear one kind speech, receive one parting kiss,—
'Lo, now I arm, so thou but grant me this.'
'So be it then;' the aged Count rejoin'd:
'Herein I vow to grant thee all thy mind.'
Briefly he spoke, and scarce his speech was done
Ere Aucassin was dight, with hauberk on;
Then, mounted on a strong and fiery steed,
With beamy lance in hand, and helmed head,
The opening gates let forth the impatient boy,
Fill'd with fond dreams of love, and wild delirious joy.
So rapt he was, so every sense was set
On the near hope to meet his Nicolette,
As one sans eyes, sans ears, he prick'd along
In the thick fight, nor mark'd the hostile throng,
Till close begirt, while loud on every side
'Lo here the youthful Aucassin!' they cried,

His shield, his lance, pluck'd forcefully away,
He wak'd at last, to turn the fortune of the day:
Now right, now left, he whirls his sword on high,
And heads, hands, arms, in mingled ruin fly:
So in some forest wild a salvage boar
By baying dogs assail'd, and harass'd sore,
Where-e'er he turns, makes fearful waste around,
And wide with gore defiles the hostile ground.
Seven doughty knights he wounded, ten he slew,
And hew'd at length his desperate passage through;
Then at full speed press'd onwards o'er the plain,
And sought Beaucaire's embattled towers again.

Just then Count Bongars heard the shouts from far
Of—'Aucassin the captive of the war!'
And hasting through the hot promiscuous fray,
Came up to share the triumph of the day:
Him spied the youth, and dealt so dire a blow
On his proud helm, as laid the warriour low;

Then by the nasal seis'd, and firmly held,

He furious drags him o'er the bloody field,

On to Beaucaire's high walls exultant hies,

And to Count Garins bears the glorious prize.

'My sire,' he cries, 'behold Valence's chief!

'Dire cause of ten years misery and grief.'—

'Ah, gallant son!' the joyful sire replied,

'Thus, thus becomes thy manhood to be tried;

'Thus should the land recount thy conquests o'er,

'Thy love's inglorious folly nam'd no more.'

'Spare your remarks,' young Aucassin rejoin'd,

'And let your plighted faith employ your mind:

'I well remember, if my sire forget;

'And claim sweet sight of long-lost Nicolette.'

'Boy!' quoth the Count, 'no further tempt mine ire;—

'Now were she here, to dreadful death by fire

'Far liefer would I straight that giglet cast;

'Else let these words I utter be my last.'

'Say'st thou!' the son replies, 'my heart doth quail
'When such foul falsehoods in old age prevail!
'—Count of Valence, thou stand'st my prisoner there—
'Give me thine hand, and hence for ever swear
'To work this father's wo, whene'er thou may'st,
'By thee still harm'd, afflicted, and disgrac'd.'—
'Sir!' quoth Count Bongars, 'war's disastrous hour
'Hath cast my lot within my foeman's power;
'Name ransome as you list;—gold, silver bright,
'Palfreys, or dogs, or falcons train'd to flight;
'Or choose you sumptuous furs, of vair, or gray;
'I plight my faith the destin'd price to pay:
'But, pray you, scoff not! mockery pray you spare
'Of one whose fall is nigh too great to bear.'
'Nay, argue not!' with interruption rude
Young Aucassin exclaim'd in furious mood,
'But shape thee to my will, or thou art slain
'E'en as thou speak'st, down cloven to thy brain.'

Dismay'd, Count Bongars urg'd his suit no more,
But vow'd each needful malediction o'er;
Then, by his conqueror led, he sought the plain,
And hail'd his late-lost liberty again.
What hence befalls young Aucassin?—the meed
Of swift repentance for his desperate deed;
Seis'd by his sire's command that self-same hour,
And lodg'd within the prison of the tower.
Inquire we now how Nicolette has far'd,
She too a thrall, with constant watch and ward:
One night, poor sleepless child, her eyes she bent
On the bright moon, that fill'd the firmament,
(For 'twas the season now of prime delights,
Of calm long days, and mild unclouded nights,)
And heard the garden echo with the tale
Of night's lone bird, the songstress nightingale;
And, as she listen'd, straight her fancy rov'd
To her lost Aucassin, her best belov'd;

Thence to his cruel sire, whose ruthless mood
Caus'd all her wo, and sought to shed her blood.
It chanc'd her matron warder slept that hour:
She seis'd the time; and, bent to flee the tower,
Crept from her couch with noiseless trembling haste,
And o'er her limbs her silken mantle cast;
Next her twain sheets with knots united strong
Slow to the window's beam she trail'd along,
And by the end made fast; then on the length
Down-sliding, clasping with her utmost strength,
Soon in the garden gay the maid did light,
And trod the dewy grass with daisies white;
White were the flowers, yet, barefoot as she far'd,
Seem'd dark of hue with Nicolette compar'd.
Led by the favouring moon's unclouded ray
The garden's gate she pass'd, then shap'd her way
On through the town, till weetless she arriv'd
Where lay her love, of liberty depriv'd.

A massy tower it was, of ancient day,
Now full of chinks, and verging to decay;
And from its gaping crannies seem'd to rise
Sad words of wo and lamentable sighs:
Such piteous plaining stay'd the listening maid,
Close to its gloomy walls her ear she laid,
Then quickly learn'd the wretched prisoner there
Was Aucassin, the victim of despair.
'Ah gentle bachelor!' the maid began,
'Why thus lament? why shed thy tears in vain?
'Thy sire, thy house, in common hatred join,
'Sweet Aucassin! I never can be thine!
'Farewell! I go, the boundless ocean cross'd,
'In a strange land to dwell, to thee for ever lost.'
E'en as she spoke, one clustering ringlet fair
Her dainty fingers sever'd from her hair,
And cast unto her love; the gentle boy
Caught up the precious gift with amorous joy,

The crisped lock with glowing kisses press'd,
Then clasp'd in close concealment to his breast;
And 'Ah, sweet Nicolette! thou may'st not flee!
'Sweet maid!' he cried, 'I cannot part with thee:
'If from this land thy luckless footsteps wend,
'Thy deed will sadly bring my days to end.'

On the tower top, for needful watch and ward,
A sentinel there stood, its custom'd guard;
He heard their moan; it fill'd his heart with ruth
For the poor helpless maid and captive youth;
When from the distant entrance of the street
He caught the trampling sound of hasty feet,
The soldiers of the night; more nigh they drew,
And the bright moon bewray'd them to his view;
Each in his hand a sheathless falchion held,
But their long garb the glittering blades conceal'd;
'Wo worth the while!' he cried, 'they now are nigh;
'Sore pity such a gentle damsel die!

'And, should she perish, well my heart doth read

'Young Aucassin will not survive the deed.'

Fain would he tell the maid, but then he fears

His treacherous words might warn the soldiers' ears;

At last, by sleight his counsel to convey,

He merrily 'gan chant the following lay.

'Maid, of heart so true,

'Of tresses fair, of laughing eye,

'Your rosy cheeks bewray the tale

'How your lover you did view:

'But beware those losells nigh;

'Biting falchions hid from you

'In their folded garments lie;

'Bloody pastimes soon ensue,

'If wisdom fail.'

'Heaven's peace your sire's and mother's soul betide

'For your good deed!' the gentle damsel cried;

Then backward slunk, and crouching to the ground,
And gathering close her flowing mantle round,
Unseen of all, her dainty limbs she laid
Where a huge buttress cast its dismal shade;
The soldier band their custom'd course kept on,
Kenn'd not the lurking maid, and soon were gone:
Then one farewell she sigh'd of deep despair,
And sought the moated ramparts of Beaucaire.
Awhile dismay'd her wishful eyes she cast
Down on the sloping gulph, profound and vast;
But dread of Garins' ire forbade her stay,
And urg'd her to attempt the dangerous way;
With pious hand one mystick cross she made
In humble trust of heaven's directing aid,
Then, sliddering down, and graz'd with many a wound,
Reach'd the dank bottom of the moat profound.
One deed was done; but sorer toils remain;
The summit of the opposing steep to gain:

It chanc'd, so favouring fortune seem'd to prove
The partner and the guide of loyal love,
A pointed stake athwart her footsteps lay,
The relick of Beaucaire's conflicting day;
With her twain hands the joyous damsel light
Caught up the prop, and strove to scale the height;
Now step by step her tottering feet she plies,
Pŏis'd on her staff, and scarcely seems to rise,
Yet does she nought for weariness recoil,
Till the steep summit gain'd rewards her toil.

Not further thence than cross-bow well might speed,
Twice drawn, its bolt, if endlong shots succeed,
A darksome forest wild its skirts around
Stretch'd far and wide o'er threescore miles of ground,
Ill fam'd of all; for, as their wonted laire,
Wild beasts and poisonous reptiles harbour'd there.
Sad strait for tender maid! some monster's prey
If onward she should urge her venturous way;

Yet, should she wait, captivity was nigh,
And the Count's doom by cruel death to die.
Thick bushy brakes, the purlieu of the wild,
Grew straggling round; and hither sped the child:
In these, foredone with toil, was fain to creep,
And sooth her senses in forgetful sleep.

Now dawn'd the day with streaky radiance red;
The shepherd swains their flocks to pasture led;
Then on the grass a rustick garment cast,
And, placing bread thereon, their plain repast,
All sitting down their morning meal began
Where from its welling source a streamlet ran.
Their simple chat awak'd the slumbering maid,
She gently greeted all, and thus she said:
'Know ye, kind friends, young Aucassin the fair,
'Whose sire, Count Garins, rules o'er all Beaucaire?'—
'Ay, marry do we, lass!'—the swains replied;
But, gazing as they spoke, such charms espied

That all astonied were with strange dismay,
And ween'd them question'd by some forest fay.
'I pray ye, friends!' sweet Nicolette rejoin'd,
'Haste to the youth, and tell him he may find
'Within these buskets here a hind so white
'He'd give five hundred marks to see the sight,
'Nay, all the gold this spacious world contains,
'Might sweet possession recompence his pains:
'Tell him that here, with virtues rare endued
'To cure all pains, all sore solicitude,
'For three full days she harbours nigh this place,
'And wooes the merry hunter to the chace;
'This season past, his search will all be vain,
'Nor may he ever hope to cure his pain.'
So ceas'd the maid, and straight with lily hand
A slender dole she dealt the shepherd band,
(These would not to the town her tidings bear,
But sure would tell him should they ken him there,)

Then lightly tripp'd, with hope's enchantment gay,
To a green brake beside the foot-worn way.
That spot she chose; and there a bower she wove
To harbour and to try her absent love:
'If well he love me as his lips declare,
(Thus argued with herself the damsel fair,)
'He sure will halt when first this bower he see,
'Then enter in and bide for sake of me:'
And as she whisper'd thus, she deck'd her cell
Still with gay flowers and herbs of odorous smell,
Then by a sheltering thorn lay secret down,
In hope fair chance her harmless wile might crown.
Meanwhile the Viscount of Beaucaire with dread
Heard the strange tale that Nicolette had fled,
And, by a crafty rumour, cast to ward
The ire and foul suspicions of his lord;
Swift through the town he spread the tidings wide
How Nicolette in bed by night had died:

Count Garins hears, and listens with delight,
Weens all his former grief extinguish'd quite;
Frees from the tower his late imprison'd boy,
And strives to rouse his sadden'd soul to joy.
Straight for a sumptuous feast he gives command,
And calls the knights and damsels of his land;
Throng'd was the court, and various pastimes shown,
All naught to Aucassin, whose love was gone:
Apart from all, in melancholy mood,
Reclin'd against a column's height he stood,
Till, at the last, in pity of his plight,
Thus counsell'd in his ear a friendly knight:
'List, sir, to me, nor think my counsel vain,
'For I once suffer'd of the self-same pain;
'Scenes such as these desponding minds offend;
'Hence—mount your steed—and to the green-wood wend;
'There, as you slowly wind your reckless way,
'Your ears beguil'd with many a warbler's lay,

'Your eyes with springing grass and flowerets bright,
'Strange solace may arise, and sooth your troubled spright.'
'Thanks, gentle knight!' young Aucassin replied,
And from the festive hall unnotic'd hied;
Then, on his steed, the city gates he pass'd,
And sought with heavy cheer the woodland waste.

Hard by the fountain's brink in rustick chat,
Again, as late, the simple shepherds sat:
A frock for drapet lay upon the grass;
And, bought with bounty of their stranger lass,
Two meal-cakes were their fare; and as they fed,
Thus to his comrades shepherd Lucas said:
'Good luck, my mates, where-ever he abide,
'Our gentle valet Aucassin betide!
'And happy chance the flaxen lass attend,
'For, soothly, she hath been the shepherds' friend;
'Her goodly gift, we wot, hath purchas'd cakes,
'And case-knives too, and flutes for merrymakes.'

Catching his closing word with ravish'd ears,
E'en while he spoke young Aucassin appears,
'For sure,' quoth he, 'these shepherd swains have met
'My best-belov'd, mine own sweet Nicolette!'
Then, while he dealt them dole with willing hand,
Uprose the ablest spokesman of the band,
And of the milk-white hind he told the tale,
That woo'd the hunter in the forest dale:
'Thanks, friends!' quoth Aucassin, and prick'd his steed,
'Her shall I rouse, so heaven my hopes succeed;'—
And to the tangled waste he lightly hied;
And, ever and anon, 'Sweet love!' he cried,
'Own sister Nicolette! for thee I haste
'To brave the salvage monsters of the waste,
'For peep of thy bright eyes, thy tender smiles,
'For thy sweet speech that every grief beguiles;'—
Then spurr'd amain: his limbs were all-to torn
With twining bramble and sharp-pointed thorn,

But nought for these he car'd; nor slack'd his way
For the last glimmer of declining day;
Yet, as he saw the sinking sun depart,
From either eye the briny tears did start:
Howbeit the paler moon day's light supplied,
And on he far'd, with fortune for his guide,
Till hard at hand he spied, in prosperous hour,
His lady's arbour green, bedeck'd with many a flower.
Scarce on the flowers his ravish'd eyes were set,
But 'Lo!' he cried, 'the bower of Nicolette!
'Sweet mistress mine! her curious fingers well
'Have wrought this shade, this heart-delighting cell,
'And here for love of her will I alight,
'And musing pass away the livelong night:'
Speaking, he sprang; but by his haste o'erthrown,
Pitch'd from his seat, and lux'd the shoulder-bone:
Maim'd as he was, with single hand made fast
Beneath a spreading tree his steed he plac'd,

Then, heedless of his pain, and wild with love,
Sped to the bower his loyal damsel wove,
And, entering there, 'Hail, dear delicious scène!
'Hail, flowers!' he cried, 'hail pleached branches green!
'What bliss were mine, what fond embracements dear,
'Were Nicolette, my heart's best solace, here.'
The maid o'erheard, and springing up for joy,
Ran from her covert nigh to clasp the boy:
So both are bless'd; and heaven, that aye doth view
With patronage the love that's pure and true,
So prosper'd the sweet lass, her strength alone
Thrust deftly back the dislocated bone;
Then, culling curious herbs of virtue tried,
While her white smock the needful bands supplied,
With many a coil the limb she swath'd around,
And nature's strength return'd, nor knew its former wound.
Now lightly on his courser, prest for flight,
See the young gallant seat his heart's delight,

Then mount behind; and, in his lusty arms
Still as he clips and treasures all her charms,
With ceaseless soft caress by turns invade
The eyes, fresh lips, and forehead of the maid:
And 'Whither wend we, love?' at times she cried;
'I wot not, I!' the joyous youth replied;
'What matters whither, to what land, we flee,
'So nought divide sweet Nicolette from me.'
Thus, many a mountain tall, and lonely vale,
And populous burghs and cities passing tale,
They travers'd in their course; nor check'd their flight
Till now the billowy sea was full in sight:
On the long strand the busy merchants stood,
Their barks danc'd proudly on the buoyant flood;
One, prest to sail, they spy; there passage crave,
Mount the steep side, and gayly cleave the wave.
Alas! not long:—the sky with alter'd form
Looks darksome round, and speaks the gathering storm:

The sailors, timely warn'd, stand in for shore,
And gain the spacious port of strong Torelore.
Here three full years of bliss without alloy
Dwelt with his partner-fair the jocund boy;
Till, with a mighty fleet that lin'd the strand,
Came the fierce Saracen to spoil the land:
To hostile power Torelore's proud fortress yields,
Waste is her peopled town and fertile fields,
Her folk all fallen, of timeless death the prey,
Or driven in sad captivity away:
And, with the rest, to different vessels borne,
Wend the poor maid and Aucassin forlorn,
He, hands and feet, confin'd: the paynim host
Then spread their canvas wide, and quit the ravag'd coast.
Scarce had they lost the land, when o'er the deep,
Howl'd far and wide the storm with scattering sweep.
Far from the rest, toss'd on from shore to shore,
Young Aucassin's light bark the surges bore;

Then wreck'd at last, by favouring fortune rare,
Fast by the castle walls of proud Beaucaire.

What wonder reign'd I need not now record,
When the folk saw and hail'd their future lord:
(For, while the son his various fortunes tried,
The father and the mother both had died:)
On to the castle straight the crowds proceed,
With seemly pomp, their sovereign at their head;
There peacefully ne reign'd, nor knew regret
Save for sad loss of hapless Nicolette.

The maid, we lately told, from Torelore's coast
Borne by the foe, and by the tempest toss'd.
To waste that luckless land with dole and dread
The Carthaginian king his fleet had led,
Not singly bent, for mov'd with equal ire
Sail'd his twelve sons, all sovereigns like their sire:
And now, with downcast eye and look depress'd
The monarch's bark contain'd the captive guest.

Her peerless charms each royal youth control,
Tame his rude will, and regulate his soul:
Much they regard the maid, and oft demand
How nam'd her parents, how her native land:
'In sooth, I know not,' Nicolette replied,
'For I a long captivity have tried:
'In tender age by paynim corsairs sold;
'Full fifteen summers since have onward roll'd.'
And now with joy their bark the sailors moor
Where stately Carthage guards the wave-worn shore;
Then what amazement seis'd the captive maid!
Each scene, each spot, her wondering eyes survey'd,
The castle's rooms and ramparts,—all appears
The witness of her birth and infant years.
Nor less of wonder mov'd, nor less delight,
The monarch old, to hear her lips recite
Such tales of infancy as prov'd her plain
His daughter long time lost, and wail'd in vain.

On her soft neck he fell, there silent lay,
And in a flood of tears gave rapture way:
Their father's joy the gallant princes share,
And clasp by turns their new-found sister fair;
Then fain would sway her to be woo'd and won
By a young Saracen, a monarch's son:
But the pure mind of Nicolette abhorr'd
To yield her plighted hand to paynim lord;
Young Aucassin alone her thoughts possess'd,
He 'reav'd her days and anxious nights of rest,
None other hope she held, no wish approv'd,
Save once again to join her best-belov'd.
So bent, she cast for furtherance of her plan
To learn the minstrel's art, and pass for man:
The violin's soft tones in secret hour
Oft did she wake, and soon was mistress of their power;
Then, when the night its darksome influence shed,
Far from the castle walls the damsel fled,

Nor stay'd, till hard beside old ocean's flood
Where a poor female's lonely cottage stood,
Her wearied feet were fain to halt at length;
So there she lodg'd, and there renew'd her strength:
Her hands, her beauteous face, she rudely marr'd
With blackening juice from bruised herb prepar'd;
And soon to move with hardier port began,
In mantle, hose, and doublet, garb'd like man:
And, as she sojourn'd thus, and eyed the wave,
Bound to Provence she kenn'd a vessel brave,
And straight for passage sued; and clave the main
With prosperous course to fertile France again.
Now forth she fares, a minstrel in attire,
(Her violin's sweet notes the swains admire,)
And shapes her course, till hard at hand she spies
Beaucaire's embattled towers and ramparts rise.
On the high steps that grac'd his palace gate,
Girt with his barons bold in royal state

It chanc'd the young Count sat; in pensive mood
His eyes were fix'd upon the neighbouring wood:
There, some years past, in prosperous search he met
His heart's desire, his own sweet Nicolette:
The well-known scene, to sad remembrance dear,
Swell'd in his heart, and wak'd a glistening tear.
Just then, advancing from the green-wood brake,
Thus to the court the minstrel damsel spake:
'Please you to hear, my noble masters all,
'What hap true lovers twain did once befall?
'Of gentle Aucassin my tale shall tell,
'And Nicolette, who lov'd each other well.'
E'en as she speaks, applausive murmurs rise,
And straight her violin's clear tones she tries,
And tunes her voice, and sings the passing truth
Of the maid's passion for her darling youth;
And how she scap'd the tower, and how she stay'd
Till the boy met her in the woodland shade;

Nor slack'd she song, till now her cheerless lay
Reach'd the sad hour that bore them both away;
Their luckless doom the minstrel sang with pain,
Then with the following musick clos'd her strain:—

'Of him no more my story tells;
'But Nicolette in Carthage dwells
'With her siré of royal sway;
'And her sire hath spousal plann'd
'With felon paynim king, they say;
'But she still answers, Nay!
'No lord will she obey
'Save Aucassin, the boon and bland:
'Kill her thousand times they may,
'None but he shall win her hand.'

What needs to tell, how while the lay did last
Distraught seem'd Aucassin, like wight aghast?
Thick rising singults his full heart oppress'd,
And nigh to bursting throbb'd his quivering breast.

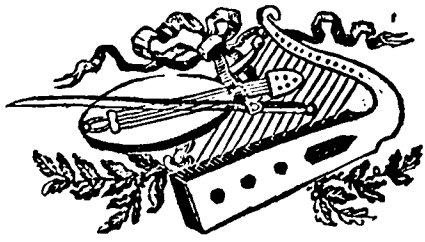
Far from the crowd, ere well she ceas'd her song,
To a lone spot he led the maid along;
And—'Know'st thou then,' he cried, 'thou minstrel youth,
'This maid whose strange adventures wake my ruth?
'Sweet Nicolette! of whom thy tale doth tell,
'Who lov'd her gentle Aucassin so well?'
'To Carthage late my wandering footsteps stray'd,'
The songstress answer'd, 'there I saw the maid;
'And one, more seeming for lost love forlorn;
'More frank, more loyal, never sure was born!
'Full sore distress and martyrdoms abhorr'd
'She bore, yet still refus'd a paynim lord.'
'Sweet gentle friend!' young Aucassin rejoin'd,
'Once more, where-e'er she dwell, the damsel find!
'Tell her that once her place of sojourn known,
'Straight thither, wing'd with love, I should have flown;
'Tell her what flattering hopes I still have fed,
'Her still have vow'd, and her alone, to wed:

'Go—and be all your choicest arts applied
'To win her here to me, to be my bride,
'Large gifts of gold and silver, noble meed
'As your own thoughts can promise, crown your deed.'
He ceas'd his speech; and, as an earnest paid,
Gave twenty marks of silver to the maid:
She promis'd, and retir'd; yet, as she pass'd,
On her dear lord one parting look she cast,
And saw him all in tears: her heart was mov'd,
Nor could she thus forsake her best-belov'd;
But back she turn'd, and pray'd him to be cheer'd:
'Put trust in me,' she cried, 'be nothing fear'd;
'Soon shall my zeal your warmest hopes fulfil,
'And win your lovely lady to your will.'
Now, left the castle gates, as swift as thought
The Viscount of Beaucaire the minstrel sought;
With grief she learns her friend no longer liv'd,
In solitude his widow'd spouse surviv'd;

She, who in childhood erst the maid did rear,
And as her daughter deem'd, and held as dear,
Beholds her with an ecstasy of joy
In uncouth habit of a minstrel boy:
So there the damsel stay'd; and culling there
Choice cleansing simples from the neighbouring laire,
Chafes with their precious juice all stains away,
And gives her skin's pure lustre back to day:
The balm of rest, the bath's salubrious power,
In one short week restores dim beauty's flower.
The good Viscountess then with joy array'd
In her own costliest robes the lovely maid;
High on a silken couch she seats her charms,
Then speeds to guide her lover to her arms.
He, from the hour he heard the minstrel's strain,
Had pass'd his days and livelong nights in pain:
'Rise, follow me,' the good Viscountess cried,
'My art perchance may make these woes subside.'

He rose, and follow'd; in his dubious mind
Disquietude with rising hope combin'd;
But, when he enter'd,—when his eyes survey'd—
O strange astonishment!—his loyal maid;
All motionless he stood: at such a sight
Excess of wondrous joy o'ercame him quite.
Light leap'd the damsel from her couch of state,
And sprang with outspread arms to clasp her mate;
Then fondly gaz'd, then clasp'd him o'er again,
And kiss'd with winning smile his eyelids twain.
What mutual soft caresses soon ensued,
By thousands given and ta'en, and still renew'd,
How both together pass'd the fleeting night,
How the next morn surpris'd them with her light,
I tell not here:—suffice, in close of all,
When seemly hour was come, from gorgeous hall
To holy church the youth led on the fair,
And wedlock made her Countess of Beaucaire.

Thus, many a sore distress and sorrow pass'd,
Behold these lovers réunite at last;
On Aucassin the maid's true heart was set,
His constant heart still beat for Nicolette;
Long liv'd they both in pleasures unallay'd:
So ends the pretty tale that I have made.



The Lay of the Little Bird.

THE LAY OF THE LITTLE BIRD.

In days of yore, at least a century since,
There liv'd a carle as wealthy as a prince:
His name I wot not; but his wide domain
Was rich with stream and forest, mead and plain;
To crown the whole, one manor he possess'd
In choice delight so passing all the rest,
No castle burgh or city might compare
With the quaint beauties of that mansion rare.

The sooth to say, I fear my words may seem
Like some strange fabling, or fantastick dream,
If, unadvis'd, the portraiture I trace,
And each brave pleasure of that peerless place;
Foreknow ye then, by necromantick might
Was rais'd this paradise of all delight;
A good knight own'd it first; he, bow'd with age,
Died, and his son possess'd the heritage:
But the lewd stripling, all to riot bent,
(His chattels quickly wasted and forespent,)
Was driven to see this patrimony sold
To the base carle of whom I lately told.
Ye wot right well there only needs be sought
One spendthrift heir, to bring great wealth to nought.
A lofty tower and strong, the building stood
Midst a vast plain surrounded by a flood;
And hence one pebble-paved channel stray'd,
That compass'd in a clustering orchard's shade:

'Twas a choice charming plat; abundant round
Flowers, roses, odorous spices cloth'd the ground;
Unnumber'd kinds, and all profusely shower'd
Such aromatick balsam as they flower'd,
Their fragrance might have stay'd man's parting breath,
And chas'd the hovering agony of death.
The sward one level held, and close above
Tall shapely trees their leafy mantles wove,
All equal growth, and low their branches came,
Thick set with goodliest fruits of every name.
In midst, to cheer the ravish'd gazer's view,
A gushing fount its waters upward threw,
Thence slowly on with crystal current pass'd,
And crept into the distant flood at last:
But nigh its source a pine's umbrageous head
Stretch'd far and wide in deathless verdure spread,
Met with broad shade the summer's sultry gleam,
And through the livelong year shut out the beam.

Such was the scene:—yet still the place was bless'd
With one rare pleasure passing all the rest:
A wondrous bird of energies divine
Had fix'd his dwelling in the tufted pine;
There still he sat, and there with amorous lay
Wak'd the dim morn, and clos'd the parting day:
Match'd with these strains of linked sweetness wrought
The violin and full-ton'd harp were nought;
Of power they were with new-born joy to move
The cheerless heart of long-desponding love;
Of power so strange, that should they cease to sound,
And the blithe songster flee the mystick ground,
That goodly orchard's scene, the pine-tree's shade,
Trees, flowers, and fount, would all like vapour fade.

'Listen, listen to my lay!'
Thus the merry notes did chime,
'All who mighty love obey,
'Sadly wasting in your prime,
'Clerk and laick, grave and gay!

'Yet do ye, before the rest,

'Gentle maidens, mark me tell!

'Store my lesson in your breast,

'Trust me it shall profit well:

'Hear, and heed me, and be bless'd!'

So sang the bird of old; but when he spied

The carle draw near, with alter'd tone he cried—

'Back, river, to thy source! and thee, tall tower,

'Thee, castle strong, may gaping earth devour!

'Bend down your heads, ye gaudy flowers, and fade!

'And wither'd be each fruit-tree's mantling shade!

'Beneath these beauteous branches once were seen

'Brave gentle knights disporting on the green,

'And lovely dames; and oft, these flowers among,

'Stay'd the blithe bands, and joy'd to hear my song;

'Nor would they hence retire, nor quit the grove,

'Til many a vow were past of mutual love;

'These more would cherish, those would more deserve;

'Cost, courtesy, and arms, and nothing swerve.

'O bitter change! for master now we see
'A faitour villain carle of low degree;
'Foul gluttony employs his livelong day,
'Nor heeds nor hears he my melodious lay.'
So spake the bird; and, as he ceas'd to sing,
Indignantly he clapp'd his downy wing,
And straight was gone; but no abasement stirr'd
In the clown's breast at his reproachful word:
Bent was his wit alone by quaint device
To snare, and sell him for a passing price.
So well he wrought, so craftily he spread
In the thick foliage green his slender thread,
That when at eve the little songster sought
His wonted spray, his heedless foot was caught.
'How have I harm'd you?' straight he 'gan to cry,
'And wherefore would you do me thus to die?'—
'Nay, fear not,' quoth the clown, 'for death or wrong;
'I only seek to profit by thy song;

'I'll get thee a fine cage, nor shalt thou lack
'Good store of kernels and of seeds to crack;
'But sing thou shalt; for if thou play'st the mute,
'I'll spit thee, bird, and pick thy bones to boot.'
'Ah, wo is me!' the little thrall replied,
'Who thinks of song, in prison doom'd to bide?
'And, were I cook'd, my bulk might scarce afford
'One scanty mouthful to my hungry lord.'
What may I more relate?—the captive wight
Assay'd to melt the villain all he might;
And fairly promis'd, were he once set free,
In gratitude to teach him secrets three;
Three secrets, all so marvellous and rare,
His race knew nought that might with these compare.
The carle prick'd up his ears amain; he loos'd
The songster thrall, by love of gain seduc'd:
Up to the summit of the pine-tree's shade
Sped the blithe bird, and there at ease he stay'd,

And trick'd his plumes full leisurely, I trow,
Till the carle claim'd his promise from below:
'Right gladly;' quoth the bird; 'now grow thee wise:
'All human prudence few brief lines comprize:
'First then, lest haply in the event it fail,
'YIELD NOT A READY FAITH TO EVERY TALE:'—
'Is this thy secret?' quoth the moody elf,
'Keep then thy silly lesson for thyself;
'I need it not:'—'Howbe 'tis not amiss
'To prick thy memory with advice like this
'But late, meseems, thou hadst forgot the lore;
'Now may'st thou hold it fast for evermore.
'Mark next my second rule, and sadly know,
'WHAT'S LOST, 'TIS WISE WITH PATIENCE TO FOREGO.'
The carle, though rude of wit, now chaf'd amain;
He felt the mockery of the songster's strain.
'Peace,' quoth the bird; 'my third is far the best;
'Store thou the precious treasure in thy breast:

'WHAT GOOD THOU HAST, NE'ER LIGHTLY FROM THEE CAST:'

—He spoke, and twittering fled away full fast.

Straight, sunk in earth, the gushing fountain dries,

Down fall the fruits, the wither'd pine-tree dies,

Fades all the beauteous plat, so cool, so green,

Into thin air, and never more is seen.

Such was the meed of avarice:—bitter cost!

The carle who all would gather, all has lost.

The Priest who had a Mother in spite of Himself.

THE PRIEST

WHO HAD A MOTHER IN SPITE OF HIMSELF.

List, lordings all, for new the tale I tell:
It chanc'd unto a priest I knew right well.
His aged mother, and a gamesome lass,
With him beneath one roof their days did pass;
The crone, with years bent down, and hunch'd behind,
Show'd in her shape the model of her mind:
The leman had, besure, a pretty face;
Nor fail'd she in the duties of her place;

The crone was busy too, and toil'd amain;
But different deeds a different guerdon gain:
So nothing lack'd the lass; but she might have
Kirtles, and cloaks, and silver girdle brave,
And linings soft of lamb or squirrel's skin:
Forsooth the neighbours made a parlous din;
The matron, ne'ertheless, was choicely fed,
Good pease, good pottage, and the best of bread;
But when she clamour'd to be costlier dress'd,
For here her taste was curious as the best,
Her eloquence might ne'er one whit prevail
Though the priest's ears were deafen'd with the tale.
Hence, loud from morn to evening would she scold,
And every neighbour heard her grievance told,
With calumnies and lies full many a score,
Still as she gadded on from door to door;
Till the whole village 'gan the priest to shun,
And hate him as a hard unnatural son.

At last, one morn when humour bore the sway,
And, as it chanc'd, it was a summer's day,
He fairly stopp'd the brawl with master-tone,
And bad her take her chattels, and begone.
She not a pace would budge, but—'Yea!' she cried,
'I go, and bring the bishop by my side:
'Besure thy secret life shall be bewray'd,
'Lewd deeds and dealings with that shameless jade:'—
'Out!'—quoth the priest in choler; 'there's the door—
'Mark well the past, for thou shalt mark no more.'
Forth far'd the crone, nigh wood; nor slack'd her way
Till prostrate at the bishop's feet she lay;
There rav'd for vengeance, outcast and exil'd,
For vengeance on a base unnatural child,
Who, wanting long time past in reverence meet,
At length had driven her forth into the street
With foul reproach and other nameless ill,
To gratify a strumpet's wanton will.

With patient ears the prelate heard the crone,
And promis'd her all justice should be done:
And, for his custom'd session was at hand,
Straight to the culprit priest he sent command
There to attend the charges to refute,
And bound the crone to prosecute her suit.

Now came the day; the priests press on to court,
Two hundred sure, and crowds of meaner sort:
Through the mid-throng the beldam passage made,
And sued full loud for justice undelay'd:
'Peace!' quoth the prelate judge, with look severe;
'Wait thou thy son's approach attendant here;
'If true thy charge, or e'er this court be ended
'His benefice is gone, and he suspended!'

The crone, unskill'd in phrase, now ween'd to see
Her pendent child aloft on gallow-tree,
And felt her inmost bowels yearn amain
For the base bantling she had borne with pain,

And lov'd so dear, and nourish'd at her breast;

And rued her luckless choler unrepress'd.

Fain would she flee; but flight may nought prevent

Her son's arrest, and sequent punishment:

This way and that her crafty wit she tries,

And, as a woman rarely lacks device,

So well she sped, that chancing to behold

A chaplain boon, with chin of double fold,

With glossy cheek, just entering at the door,

And a huge mass of cumbrous paunch before,

'Lo here! lo here my bairn!' she 'gan to cry;

'Now, sire, now grant me justice, or I die!'

'Unthankful son!' the prelate straight began

To the strange priest with mute amazement wan,

'Thus dost thou scant thine aged parent there

'To deck thy leman loose with robes of vair?

'Thus shame the church, and bring her wealth to waste

'In harlot revel squander'd and disgrac'd?'—

'Liege lord!' the astonied chaplain cried, 'I know,
'And practis'd once, what sons to mothers owe;
'Many a year since, so may my bones find rest!
'My parent died, and all those duties ceas'd:
'But for that woman there, by day or night
'Till this strange hour she never cross'd my sight!'
"How!' quoth the prelate, kindling as he spoke,
'Thus would'st thou rid thy shoulder from the yoke?
'Thy parent, first ill-treated, then denied,
'And the strong justice of my court defied.
'Hear then—in thee this instant I arrest
'All ministry and function of a priest,
'Unless borne hence with thee this matron wend,
'Hous'd, clad, and cherish'd as thy dearest friend:
'Forth from this hour should she or stranger prove
'That aught thou fail in debt of filial love,
'The law takes course.'—The wrathful prelate ceas'd:
Abash'd full sore retir'd the luckless priest;

In doleful dump he mounts his steed amain
With his foul prize, and homeward turns the rein.
Two miles or more the pair had journey'd on,
When in the road they met the beldam's son;
And, 'Whither bent?' the rueful chaplain cried:
'I to the bishop's court,' the son replied:
'Thee,' quoth the first, 'may like good luck befall!
'I too was summon'd to attend the hall,
'Nor wist I why; and lo, this goodly meed,
'My mother, as it seems, to house and feed.'
The son, who, while the priest his story told,
Eyed the quaint gestures of the beldam old
With nods and winks to keep the secret tight,
Refrain'd from laughter well as mortal might:
'If thou,' quoth he, 'thus early at the court,
'Hast had one mother given thee to support,
'My mind forebodes our worthy prelate's pain
'May gift us tardier travellers with twain.

'What say'st thou, friend? suppose some wight inclin'd
'To take this reverend matron up behind,
'And quit thee of thy charge, and kind entreat;
'What brave reward might recompense the feat?'
'Troth,' quoth the priest, 'to speak without disguise,
'I'm not the man to scant him in his price:
'I'll pay him forty livres by the year,
'Villain or clerk, nor think the bargain dear.'
'Enough, fair brother mine!' returns the son;
'So please the lady here, our deed is done.'
The crone well-pleas'd besure: so, all agreed,
Home son and mother fare on pacing steed;
Each year his plighted dole the chaplain paid,
Nor future plaint to bishop e'er was made.

The Canonesses and the Gray Nuns.

BY JOHN DE CONDÉ.

THE CANONESSES AND THE GRAY NUNS.

ONE night, as stretch'd upon my bed I lay,
('Twas in the merry month of lusty May,)
My heart all joy, my spirits clear and bright,
And every sense inspir'd with love's delight;
I dreamt a dream:—meseem'd, I wist not why,
Beneath a tall o'ershadowing pine to lie:
Round, far and wide, a pathless forest spread;
And birds, by thousands, caroll'd o'er my head:

Various the notes, in emulation sung,

And love's sweet musick trill'd from every tongue.

Thus as I mus'd, and listen'd at mine ease,

The joyous concert seem'd at once to cease;

Thereat I look'd, and saw a parrot stand

Who in their mid-song check'd that warbling band.

The favour'd bird great Venus' courier came,

And bore this message from his royal dame,

That when the morrow's dawn should first unfold,

High court of justice there the goddess-queen would hold:

And at these tidings joy brake forth aloud,

And a new burst of musick fill'd the wood:

And straight, while sweetly rose their echoing lays,

To love's great queen a throne the songsters raise.

The sun scarce rising shed his orient flame,

Ere with her countless train the goddess came.

Earth, all around, with springing flowerets grac'd

And signified her footsteps as she pass'd;

Each neighbouring tree with livelier foliage spread,
And stretch'd its shadowy mantle o'er her head;
And bubbling fountains rose, and gently roll'd
O'er beds of sparkling gravel, pure like gold:
So down she sat: and straight her vassal crowd,
The lovers of her train, in reverence bow'd;
Prone at her feet in adoration lay,
And sigh'd the homage of their hearts away.
And next to these, in meet succession, came
Those who of love endur'd some portious shame;
At her throne's footstool stood the suppliant throng,
And all for justice sued, and remedy of wrong.
A lovely Canoness came first in sight,
Whom many a gentle led, and many a knight;
(Her intercourse, it seem'd, had swoln their pride;)
Some social sisters grac'd the fair-one's side.
Her robe well told the order that she bore;
With many a seemly fold 'twas plaited o'er;

And o'er the same there was a surplice spread,
All wrought of linen of the slenderest thread,
And white like snow; though on its surface sleek
Some rumples seem'd her journey's toil to speak.
She thus began:—'Deign, mighty queen, to hear;
'Yield to thy subjects' plaints thy favouring ear;
'Zeal for thy cause thy votaries here proclaim,
'Here vow that zeal through countless time the same.
'Long wont the best, the noblest, of the land,
'Sue for our love, and joy in our command.
'Light was all toil, and cheap was all expence,
'To win that palm of high pre-eminence;
'And feasts, and tournaments, and tables-round,
'Proclaim'd the wight thus bless'd and thus renown'd.
'Now, changeful doom! the Nuns with amice gray
'Lure from our court our paramours away:
'Kind pliant guise that no long service draws
'Hath won some base ones to desert our cause,

'And yield them preference:—Regard our cries,

'Great queen! be just! these saucy foes chastize;

'Nor let them henceforth claim with upstart tone

'Wights form'd for us, as we for them, alone.'

So ceas'd the dame; and Venus, heavenly fair,

With token of redress receiv'd her prayer:

Yet stay'd she doom, as meet the adverse side

Should plead their cause with argument replied.

A lovely Bernardine of winning mien

Then forth advanc'd, and thus address'd the queen.

'Great queen! for loveliness and power renown'd!

'To work whose will our votive lives are bound;

'Sole bliss, sole solace of our hapless state!

'I hear our rancorous foes' reproachful hate:

'What then? hath nature shap'd of homelier mould?

'(Attest, great queen, if here the truth be told!)

'Are we then fashion'd of some baser clay?

'Less form'd to love, to be belov'd, than they?

'Are we less young, less dainty than our foes?

'Or can our hearts less feel for lovers' woes?

'Their garb more trim, more sumptuous, I confess;

'But boon demeanour sure excelleth dress?

'Ours are the tender glance, the winning smile,

'The sweet solicitudes that life beguile.

'On us, on ours, this grievous charge they lay,

'That we have borne their paramours away:

'Come, let the truth be known!—'tis scornful pride

'Hath scar'd full oft their suitors from their side:

'Our softness charms, our modesty invites,

'And hence our train of gentles and of knights:

'These are our arts, and these our forceful snares

'To capture helpless lovers unawares.

'Oft have we tried, but still have tried in vain,

'To send them back to their high dames again:

'Pleas'd with the cheer our simple sisters show,

'Some soon return, and some refuse to go.

'Nay, might we yield belief to what they say,

'Those dainty robes, that bravery of array,

'(No slender cost,) has vail'd a love less clear,

'More soil'd with interest than awaits them here.'

So spake the Bernardine; and anger stirr'd

Each Canoness to hear her closing word.

Through the whole band a general murmur rose;

Each reddening cheek with indignation glows;

And, 'What?' their advocate in haste replied,

'These slaves add insult to their saucy pride!

'Boast how they love, and insolently dare

'In courtesies and charms with us compare.

'Good sooth, him well it fits to blush for shame

'Whose gross desire can feed so base a flame,

'Admire those limbs with unctuous woollen warm,

'And find gray gowns and rustick babbling charm.

'What knight, what noble, who of high degrees

'Would deign to cast away a thought on these,

'But for their forward ways, their wanton wiles,
'Looks void of shame, and loose lascivious smiles?
'Lo, this their secret spell men's hearts to hold!
'Since, to the grief of Love, it must be told;
'Who sees those gifts he wills long time remain
'Sought by true hearts with aspiration vain,
'With suppliant sighs, with looks deject and pale,
'Here, prostitute to all, a general stale.
'Hence, honest friends, and, at the last grown wise,
'Let your lay-brothers and your monks suffice:
'There love your fill, there dole of presents deal,
'Make fat your mates from your own scanted meal;
'We yield you leave;—such wights as these ne'er dwell
'At Mons, at Maubeuge, Moutier, and Nivelle:
'But gentle blood—(I warn you once again—)
'Canons and knights—to us alone pertain:
'Aspire no more to pass these bounds decreed;
'So part ye fair, and prosper in your deed.'

Here the proud dame her scornful counsel clos'd:
No whit the adverse Nun seem'd discompos'd,
But gently thus replied: 'Such furious mood
'I mark nor need not, for my cause is good.
'Rage such as thine is weakness, not support,
'To a good cause; contemptuous of the court;
'And a foul shock and insult, as I ween,
'To the great presence of our goddess-queen.
'Love heeds not wealth, nor nobleness of birth,
'But joys to mingle opposites on earth:
'An ermin'd dutchess oft less lov'd I read
'Than a poor village lass in lowly weed.
'Our gray Cistertian garb may nought compare
'With your long robes and mantles lin'd with vair;
'But not for these we boast our rival might,
'But for our hearts, sole source of love's delight:
'Love wooes the heart alone; and nought we fear
'From the great goddess-queen of censure here

'But trust with suppliant suit her will to move

'To grant us too the BENEFICE OF LOVE.'

Scarce ceas'd the Nun, when hollow murmurings loud

Buzz'd on all sides throughout the countless crowd;

For various ways discordant interest draws,

And various judgments scan the important cause.

Some choose ambition's side, and best approve

The Canonesses' claims to rule in love;

But the most part their mutter'd suffrage join

In favour of the modest Bernardine.

Thus all to all their different thoughts disclose,

Till from her throne imperial Venus rose;

Then ceas'd the din at once, and all was still,

While thus the goddess spake her sovereign will.

'To you, meseems, who here for judgment stand,

'Well known, o'er all that breathes, our high command:

''Tis I, sole origin of love, inspire

'Beast, fowl, and fish, all nature, with desire.

'Slaves to my law the mingling brutes embrace,
'By instinct urg'd to propagate their race:
'Man, nobler form'd, it fits at reason's call
'To make due choice; and I accept of all.
'The monarch's son, the youth of low degree,
'Are both beheld with equal eyes by me:
'Let love, let loyal love man's heart engage,
'He wins my favour, be he prince or page.
'Ye Canonesses! rob'd in surplice white,
'Long have I mark'd your service with delight:
'Your garb, your graces, and your birth, must gain
'And fill with suppliant crowds your suitor train;
'Keep these; yet drive not from my court away
'These nuns, sequester'd from the blaze of day,
'Whose hearts such constancy in secret prove,
'Whom harsh constraint inspires with mightier love.
'More elegance, I yield, more means to please
'Ye own, than dignify the lot of these;

'Yet oft, for power of long-protracted course,

'The knight's gay steed mates not the ploughman's horse.

'The peacock's plumage charms our dazzled eyes,

'But 'tis his flesh the daintier treat supplies.

'Within my court, alike to every kind,

'I will free choice, as willing all should find.

'On your wise governance alone depends

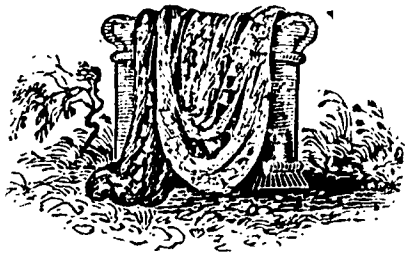
'To keep your gallant train of suitor friends:

'Take pattern from your rivals: learn from these

'More gentleness, and more desire to please;

'And, trust my prescience, henceforth you'll deplore

'Your paramours inconstant grown no more.



The Order of Knighthood.

THE ORDER OF KNIGHTHOOD.

From the grave tales the wise are wont to tell,
Sure profit springs to him who hearkens well:
The following story, cloth'd in pleasant rhyme,
Shall prove this doctrine without waste of time.

Of such rare chance as erst in Paynim land
Befell that monarch Saladin the Grand,
That loyal Saracen, that warriour bold,
The worthy course shall now by me be told.

Long time sad Christendom had view'd with pain
Her holy faith depress'd, her votaries slain;
Leagued, at the last, our pious warriours rose,
Worn out, it seem'd, and wearied of their woes:
Prest from all parts in glittering arms they stood,
And brav'd this shedder of the Christian blood;
And might stout deeds desir'd success have won,
Sure victory had been their's, and their's alone;
But heaven, to whom pertains the event of fight,
That boon denied, and baffled mortal might:
One huge disastrous day o'erwhelm'd their host,
And liberty or life was nobly lost.

Thrall'd with the captives of that luckless hour
Prince Hugh was found, of chivalry the flower;
Him, as their prince, Tabaria's land ador'd,
Him Galilee's fair plains confess'd their lord.
All prais'd the knight: his worth, the general theme,
Fill'd the proud Souldan's heart with just esteem:

Hence, when he saw the illustrious thrall attend,
He hail'd him with the count'nance of a friend,
And own'd that hour his boast, that hour which held
Tabaria's prince enchain'd, the glory of the field:
Yet, proudly brief, this doom he straight decreed;
Large ransome, or the forfeit of his head.
The captive prince thus left with option free,
Each wight that hears may well the choice foresee;
Forthwith he asks what sums his ransome claim'd,
And hears twice fifty thousand bysants nam'd:
The prince grew desperate when the sum was told,
Past hope it seem'd were e'en his princedom sold:
'Nay, nought there needs,' the gallant Souldan cries,
'That princedoms fall, thy ransome's sacrifice;
'Priz'd as a prince, and as a knight renown'd,
'Go, search the land, where-e'er thy faith is found,
'There seek thy liberty; approv'd in fight
'Within these climes there dwells no Christian wight,

'But, when he hears, will deal large dole to thee,
'And glory that his gift may set thee free.'
So counsell'd Saladin; so speaking, gave
Immediate passport to Tabaria brave:
The liberal boon one sole restriction bound;
Twice when the sun should close his annual round
Should aught fall short the ransome to fulfil,
Back must the prince, to bide his conqueror's will.
Fair were the terms, the prince was nothing loath,
But ratified the treaty with his oath;
Then thank'd the Souldan from his inmost heart,
And turn'd him on the instant to depart;
When Saladin, who long had borne in mind
To learn whence knighthood sprang, and how defin'd,
Miss'd not the hour; but by the hand he hent
His captive guest, in marvel what were meant,
And, to a lonely chamber straight retir'd,
Told what the tenour of his will requir'd.

'Oft have I learn'd,' quoth he, 'the worth, the might,
'Of knights, so nam'd from some mysterious rite:
'Now, by that faith adjur'd which Christians hold,
'These rites declare! this dignity unfold!
'Here stay thy steps: for from thy hand I claim
'These rites, these honours, and this knightly name.'

Much with the strange command the prince confus'd
Stood mute awhile, then decently refus'd:
He fear'd 'twere sure the Holy Order's stain,
Dealt to an Infidel, a man profane:
Wroth was the Souldan at his thrall's delay,
Sternly he frown'd, and warn'd him to obey;
Ill did that season or that place become
Weak pride, to brave the power that rul'd its doom:
Words such as these desir'd obedience wrought,
And knighthood's rites began and knighthood's lore was taught.

Now nigh the laver's verge the Souldan stood,
And o'er his face was pour'd the cleansing flood;

His beard was shaven, shorn his clustering hair,
Whilst menial hands the mystick bath prepare.
With meet regard, yet wondering in his mind,
'Whence grow these forms?' he ask'd, 'and what design'd?'—
'These, with the bath,' return'd the observant knight,
'Pure symbol of our first baptismal rite,
'Pourtray like pureness of man's soul within:—
'Let none dare enter here defil'd with sin.'
He ceas'd; the admiring Souldan heard with awe
The strength, the sanctity, of knighthood's law.
With sequent course each grave observance came,
And still the prince unvail'd its moral and its aim.
When from the waves the imperial pupil rose,
Sped to the appointed couch, and sought repose:
'Lo here!' he cried, 'the type of heavenly rest!
'Of that sweet paradise that waits the bless'd!
'There the strong arm that still maintains the right,
'The weak man's guard against the oppressor's might,

'There the pure soul, when this world's sufferings cease,
'Finds sure reward and everlasting peace.'

When from the bed he sprang, and, wide display'd,
The snow-white shirt his vigorous limbs array'd;
'Lo here!' Tabaria's prince remark'd again,
'This spotless cloth asks flesh without a stain.
'This scarlet robe,'—(a robe to hand he drew
E'en as he spoke, and o'er the Paynim threw;)
'This sumptuous robe with sanguine tinct imbued,
'Claims one for heaven resolv'd to shed his blood;
'Speaks the true knight who shuns nor death nor dole,
'Fix'd is his faith, and heaven sustains his soul.'

Now all was sped, save one conclusive rite,
The custom'd stroke that dubs the future knight.
This custom'd stroke, (for so Tabaria crav'd,
Sway'd by the Paynim's rank,) the Souldan wav'd:
Its place, as seem'd, grave precepts well might hold;
And thus the fourfold discipline was told.

'Still to the truth direct thy strong desire,
'And flee the very air where dwells a liar:
'Fail not the Mass; there still with reverent feet
'Each morn be found, nor scant thine offering meet:
'Each week's sixth day with fast subdue thy mind,
'For 'twas the day of PASSION for mankind;
'Else let some pious work, some deed of grace,
'With substituted worth fulfil the place:
'Haste thee, in fine, when dames complain of wrong
'Maintain their right, and in their cause be strong:
'For not a wight there lives, if right I deem,
'Who holds fair hope of well-deserv'd esteem,
'But to the dames by strong devotion bound
'Their cause sustains, nor faints for toil or wound.'

So spake the prince; his words to wonder wrought:
Great Saladin the exalted ardour caught:
High sense of gratitude inspir'd his breast,
And words like these his kindling soul confess'd:

'Go:—from the band that, fallen within our power,
'Mourn the hard lot of war's disastrous hour,
'Choose where thou wilt; ten knights thy lore hath freed;
'Well do the glorious doctrines claim the meed.'
He ceas'd; with thankfulness the prince replies,
Whilst in his breast he feels new boldness rise;
And 'Sire!' he adds, 'whilere thy wise decree
'Mark'd out the means to set thy prisoner free;
'Taught me to trust that on this Eastern ground
'There dwells no wight for feats of arms renown'd,
'But when he hears my tale of ransome told
'Will glory in the cause that claims his gold:—
'First then I sue where I esteem the most;
'And from thy bounty crave the Souldan's cost.'
'Sir knight,' great Saladin return'd again,
'Well hast thou sued; thou shalt not trust in vain:
'Lo, half thy ransome to thy prayer is given;
'All may be thine or e'er the hour of even.'

He spoke, and straightways to his audience-hall
With hastening step led on the illustrious thrall;
In the large space arrang'd on either side
Full fifty Emirs throng'd its entrance wide;
The gallant Souldan each in order sued,
And claim'd their gifts to ransome prince so good:
With rival zeal his sovereign each man heard,
Each, as he might, a liberal gift conferr'd:
Their zeal was vain; the enormous void to fill,
There lack'd full thirteen thousand bysants still:
Then Saladin, whose soul did nobly glow
With such high worth as none but heroes know,
From his own treasury bade that sum be told,
And to the captive prince dealt out the gold:
'There, Prince!' he cried, 'thy price of freedom see;
'Take this; and take unpurchas'd liberty;
'Choose thy ten knights, the nearest to thy heart,
'I claim no ransome—uncontroll'd depart.'

Nought now there fail'd to crown Tabaria's joy,
But that his wealth was bounded in the employ:
In Paynim bonds full many a Christian lay,
And mourn'd his hopeless doom, and linger'd life away:
Fain would the prince with countless sums have sought
To loose these chains, but bootless was the thought,
For Saladin had sworn in ireful hour
By Mahomet's dread name, no ransome's power
Should from their woes the luckless captives free,
And yield them back to light and liberty:
Such was the Souldan's vow; Tabaria griev'd
With a reluctant heart the gold receiv'd,
And, eight days' tarrying past, while feasting reign'd,
On the ninth morn safe-conduct he obtain'd:
Him fifty Paynims bold, a guardian band,
Safe through the perils of that hostile land
Lead on to Galilee; with him there go
His ten, the chosen knights, the partners of his wo.

There ceas'd their toil, there vanish'd all their pain;
With gladden'd hearts they trod that soil again;
There, free of soul, his gifts Prince Hugh diffus'd,
And riches, nobly dealt him, nobly us'd.

" Sirs! ye who hear my tale! 'tis form'd to please
High-mettled souls and brave, and none but these.
For folk of other mould, right well I wot
'Tis all time lost; they comprehend me not.
Enough of such in former days I've known,
All prompt to make this prince's case their own;
To speak more plain—all prompt to have and hold
Such countless donatives of Paynim gold;
Who yet have eyed me, when my tale was done,
Like some old dotard of the good times gone.

The Gentle Bachelor.

AN EXTRACT.

THE GENTLE BACHELOR.

WHAT gentle bachelor is he
Sword-begot in fighting field,
Rock'd and cradled in a shield,
Whose infant food a helm did yield?
On lions' flesh he makes his feast,
Thunder lulls him to his rest;
His dragon-front doth all defy,
His lion-heart, and libbard-eye,

His teeth that like boars' tushes are,
His tiger-fierceness, drunk with war.
Ponderous as a mace his fist
Down descends where-e'er it list,
Down, with bolt of thunder's force,
Bears to earth both knight and horse.
Keener far than falcon's sight
His eye pervades the clouds of fight;
And at tourneys 'tis his play
To change the fortune of the day,
Wielding well his helpful arm,
Void of fear, as nought might harm.
O'er the seas to English ground,
Be some rare adventure found,
Or to Jura's mount, he hies;
These are his festivities.
In the fields of battle join'd,
Like to straws before the wind

All his foes avoid his hand,

None that deadly brunt may stand.

Him in joust may no man see

But still with foot from stirrup free,

Knight and courser casting down

Oft with mortal dint o'erthrown;

Nor shield of bark, nor steel, nor lance,

Aught may ward the dire mischance.

When he slumbers, when he sleeps,

Still on head his helm he keeps;

Other pillow fits not him

Stern of heart and stout of limb.

Broken swords, and spears that fail,

And the shatter'd hauberk's mail,

These compose the warriour's treat

Of poignant sauce or comfits sweet;

And dust he quaffs in fields of death,

And quaffs the panting courser's breath.

When the lusty chase he tries,

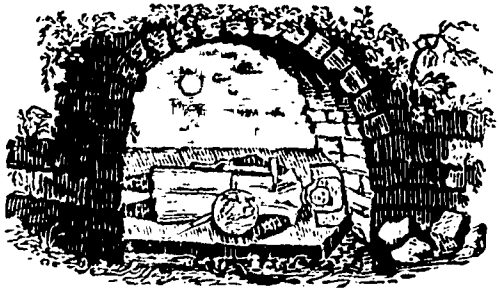
On foot o'er hill and dale he hies;

Lion, rutting hart, or bear,

He joys to seek and slaughter there.

Wealth to all throughout the land

Wide he deals with lavish hand.



The Mantle made amiss.

THE MANTLE MADE AMISS.

Sweet cousin mine, since well I ween your eye
Scans with delight the deeds of Arthur's day,
And since, before all other things, I try
To win you solace howsoe'er I may;
Lo here, recorded of his table-round
A goodly tale, with pain compil'd, I send:
This in an ancient volume late I found,
And scant could read, so rudely was it penn'd:

Please you, accept it kind; for name I wis
It may be well yclep'd 'The Mantle made amiss.'

It was the time of Pentecost the feast,
When royal Arthur will'd high court to hold,
Statelier than e'er beforetime: thither press'd,
At his command, kings, dukes, and barons bold:
And for great jousts and tourneys were design'd,
Each he ordain'd his chosen fair to bring,
Damsel or spouse, the mistress of his mind:
So all was done, all stood before the king,
Damsel and dame, with many a matchless knight:
That never England's realm beheld so proud a sight.

Each one to sport, to merrimake, was bent,
To merrimake beyond all former joy;
But Mourgue the fay bethought her to prevent,
To work fair Guenever the Queen's annoy;

Long had she envied those superiour charms
Which wan the heart of Launcelot du Lake;
Jealous she was, for he had shunn'd her arms;
So all were punish'd for their sovereign's sake:
And yet, perchance, had Guenever the Queen
Besought her presence there, this harm might not have been.

Now were the tables all prepar'd to dine,
Whiles at a window that o'erlook'd the street
Join'd with Sir Gawaine Arthur did recline,
In social converse mingling, as was meet:
Soon they beheld a youth advance, whose steed
An ample case of costliest velvet bore;
Now he dismounts, now climbs the steps with speed;
Now bends with humbled knee the King before:
'Sovereign, a boon!' he cries, 'with heart sincere
'A boon my mistress craves, as she that loves you dear.

'No ill, no damage or reproach, shall spring;
'Thus doth my princely dame command me say;
'Pass but your word ere I reveal the thing,
'You never will have cause to rue the day.'
Won with his words, the monarch rais'd his head,
And, 'Friend, we grant thy boon unknown,' he cried:
Low louts the youth; 'his princely dame,' he said,
'Told, by his mouth, her wish was satisfied.'
Then to the ground he bent, and 'gan unlace
The bands, embroider'd brave, that fast secur'd his case.

Well may ye guess King Arthur long'd amain
To see this costly crimson case unbound;
Curious he was, and so were all his train,
Though doughty warriours of the table-round.
Forth from its womb the youth a mantle drew,
Such ne'er was seen in England's realm before,

So lovely did it seem, so rich, so new;
Let the kind reader marvel ne'er the more;
For all of fairy filaments 'twas wrought,
By fairy fingers spun, with power of fairy fraught.

Damsel and dame behov'd them well beware,
Such were its virtues, and so strange its power,
If loose inconstancy had wanton'd e'er
In those soft breasts which should be true love's bower;
For to all such, whene'er they might assay
To deck them therewithal, 'twould shrink, 'twould swell,
Now long, now short 'twould be:—Ah wicked fay!
Thou know'st thy fellow-females' mood too well!
Had they but guess'd what silk 'twas wove withal,
The world might not have won their stay near Arthur's hall.

Now nigh the King the gentle youth advanc'd,
And to his hands the wondrous charge consign'd;

Told how its secret properties enhanc'd
Its outward excellence, and then rejoin'd;
'Sire, let each fair who now adorns your court,
'In turn assay the adventure to achieve;
'Who best shall speed, nor find it long nor short,
'Let her, so wills my dame, alone receive,
'Fit guerdon of her worth, the mantle brave:—
'This is the nameless boon, the boon you freely gave.'

Sore chaf'd King Arthur now, and seem'd to see
Much lurking mischief in his promise made;
Inly he fum'd, in moody reverie,
Till thus at length the sage Sir Gawaine said:
'Sire, since your word is past, 'twere meet you send,
'And bid your royal consort to the hall;
'Let her with all her comely train attend,
'Damsel and dame, to try this wondrous pall.'

'Go then,' the King replied, 'our consort bring;
'Sacred should be the word, the promise, of a king.'

So to the Queen the sage Sir Gawaine hies,
As one who conn'd his lesson passing well,
And fair salutes, and paints how fair a prize
The King decrees the worthiest bonnibell;
But of those passing virtues nought to tell
Which lay conceal'd within the mystick pall
He well aviz'd, for sure that searching spell
Had scar'd these gentle dames from Arthur's hall:
Now to the royal presence all are sped,
A blithe and buxom band, their sovereign at their head:

And Arthur now, who deem'd it shame full sore
To be so cozen'd by that crafty boy,
The gorgeous pall unfolding on the floor,
Thus briefly spake, with looks of little joy:

'High dames and fair! to her of all the train

'Whose shape this curious mantle best may fit,

'To her 'tis doom'd of right to appertain,

'And may some mighty blessing wend with it!'

So spake the King; the mantle all admir'd;

And first, as first in place, the Queen the proof requir'd.

In luckless hour she first requir'd the proof,

And o'er her shoulders first the mantle flung;

For all too short before it shrunk aloof,

Albe a length of train behind there hung;

Thereat Sir Ewaine, good King Urien's son,

Who spied this sovereign lady chang'd in hue,

And she who ween'd some secret shame was won,

Such loudly-buzzing laughter thence there grew;

Thus turn'd the shrewd surmisings of the rest;

For ill he bore the Queen should be her subjects' jest:

'Leave, lady dear, that mantle, all too short
'For stately mien and stature straight like thine,
'And let this damsel here, the next in court,
'Around her dainty limbs the prize entwine.'
Hector-the-son's fair friend the lass was hight;
E'en as he spoke the pall she deftly raught,
And round her cast; full jocund was her spright;
But the shrewd cloak soon sham'd her all to nought:
For, howsoe'er she turn, or stretch, or hale,
Full half a foot or more its shrivell'd length would fail.

Of all the knights who grac'd King Arthur's board
For flouting jests Sir Kay was most renown'd;
Nor might he now refrain his wanton word,
But to the Queen would every whit expound.
So, gently bending to his sovereign's ear,
'Great Queen,' he whisper'd, 'mirrour of all grace,

'Thy loyalty excels this damsel's here.'—
'Sir Kay!' the Queen replied, 'unfold the case:
'This strange device I will thou straight declare,
'And why this wayward cloak hath left our skirts so bare.'

Therewith Sir Kay recounts the varlet's tale;
From end to end the venom'd sleight he told:
Nought did the Queen of sage advisement fail
To bear with gree where little boots to scold;
And, well she ween'd, as one aggriev'd to rail,
Would but the more their piteous plight unfold,
So loud exclaims, 'What silly wight would quail
'At Mourgue the fay's devices, known of old?
'Come, damsels all, partake the fairy's jest,
'And see who first in place may bide this gamesome test.'

And, as she spake, the Seneschal Sir Kay,
Who joy'd to see these dames so ill bested,

Cries, 'On, fair lasses! gladly greet the day
'That showers such honour on each loyal head:
'Now be it known how tender and how true
'These looks of love, and breasts of ivory pure;
'Now may those knights, so sad for lack of you,
'With fresh delight their patient pains endure.'
So spake Sir Kay; the damsels one and all
Now wish'd them far away escap'd from Arthur's hall.

Their sorry cheer, their looks dejeet and wan,
Did move the monarch's noble heart to ruth;
Thence to that stripling page he thus began;—
'This cloak meseems most vilely made, in sooth:
'For aught I read, there wons not here in court
'One dame or damsel, be she low or tall,
'But finds this luckless garment long or short:
'Hence—bear it back!—it suits not here at all.'

'Ah sire! your word is pass'd;' the youth replied;
'The promise of a king must evermore abide.'

What needs it further stretch my tale's extent,
To tell how fail'd each dame, and fum'd each knight?
How Kay's o'erweening mirth was fitly shent
When his frail spouse betook herself to flight:
Or how Sir Ydier's paramour so bright,
(Sir Ydier, doubtless she of all was chaste,)
With that quaint garb in front full fairly dight,
Behind was scarcely clad beneath the waist:
Or how 'twas whisper'd in Sir Ydier's ear,
'Right well the dame is vail'd whose hinder parts appear.'

In fine, upon a bench, all wo-begone,
These luckless ladies side by side were plac'd;
In all that crowded court there was not one
But more or less she found herself disgrac'd.

Whereat the stripling varlet loudly cried,
As well aviz'd none there the pall might claim,
'I pray thee, sire! be every chamber tried,
'Lest some perchance there lurk of purer fame;
'For so alone 'tis given me to fulfil
'As fits in every point my sovereign lady's will.'

With that the King commission'd Girflet straight:
In every nook and crevice Girflet pried;
Yet, though his peering search he nought would bate,
One only damsel hath his zeal espied;
And she, for ailment fain in bed to bide,
Excuse did plead, for that her strength was spent;
But he, forsooth, might not be so denied;
There would he be till she her clothes had hent:
No help the damsel saw, she needs must go;
So to the hall she pass'd with feeble steps and slow.

Her mate was there, the foremost wight in hall:
His name to learn perchance might please you well:
'Twas Karados Brise-Bras, approv'd of all
A good and hardy knight, the sooth to tell.
Soon as he spied his mistress enter in,
As doom'd that dire adventure to assay,
Through all his frame he felt a war begin,
His face with crimson stain'd, his heart like clay;
And, for her absence glad of spright whilere,
So now his troubled sense was overwhelm'd with fear.

'Dear lady mine!' (he thus was heard to say,)
'If aught misgives thee, shun that baleful robe!'
'To see thy shame, to feel my love decay,
'I would not bide for all this earthly globe:
'Far better were it aye in doubt remain,
'Than read the truth by such disastrous test;

'Than see thee now thy sex's honour stain,
'And marshall'd there on bench, the vulgar jest.'
'Nay, why so sore torment thee?' Girflet cried,
'Lo, there two hundred sit, so lately deified.'

The loyal damsel, ne'er a whit dismay'd,
Around her neck the mantle boldly threw;
The same so meetly all her limbs array'd,
No seamstress e'er might make it half so true:
Whereat the stripling page did loudly cry,
'Now, lady fair! thy lover joy betide!
'Thine be the pall, who winn'st the victory!
Thine be the pall! thy virtue well is tried!'
E'en as he spoke the King declar'd assent:
The rest with feigned scorn would vail their discontent.

But for Sir Karados, the damsel's friend,
Him glad of heart I read as man might be;

Forth with the mantle straight that pair did wend,
And choicely priz'd, and hoarded charily.
Since then, whenas both these were dead and gone,
It close was stow'd where none the place might see,
Nor lives there wight on earth but I alone,
Of power, sweet cousin mine, to shew it thee.
Avize thee then; for, should ye crave the test,
Thou or thy friends so fair may presently be dress'd.

But should it chance the wiser counsel seem
In its dark den to let it slumber still,
There shall it bide; which way soe'er thou deem,
Thy wish alone can rule my yielding will;
For bent am I, and shall for aye remain,
So long as life within this frame may stay,
To count thy friendship as my greatest gain,
To strive how best I may thy will obey.

But should the pall some whit too scanty prove,
In sooth, sweet cousin mine, I might not leave to love.

And thus, meseems, the tale is fully done,
Save that I fail'd that damsel's name to tell
Whose worth of yore the perlous mantle won;
Known be it then that peerless bonnibell
Was clep'd of all ——— so stay thee, story mine!
Come, bear around a brimmed bowl of wine!

The Mule without a Bridle.

BY PAYSANS DE MAISIERES.

THE MULE WITHOUT A BRIDLE.

It was the holy feast of Whitsuntide,
When Arthur will'd in royal state reside,
And where proud Carduel's battlements arise
Hold his high court with due solemnities.

Straight through each province the wide bruit was known,
And every chief resorted to the throne;
High dames, and doughty knights, a numerous host,
Whate'er of worthiness the land could boast,

All came, obedient to their sovereign's word,
And dignified the prince they all ador'd.
Now one day's joy was past, and every guest
Was rising from the second noon-tide feast,
When from afar a damsel was descried,
Slow toward the castle gate she seem'd to ride,
A goodly mule her graceful form sustain'd,
Unbitted was his mouth, his neck unrein'd.
The King, the Queen, with all their court, admir'd,
And tedious grew their time, with vain conjecture tir'd
Till, as the damsel now approach'd more nigh,
Her youth, her opening charms, struck every eye;
Swift flies to meet her many a youthful knight,
Bends at her knee, and helps her to alight:
Their courtesies with mournful cheer she bore,
For sorrow, as it seem'd, had struck her sore;
And many a tear, fast trickling down her cheek,
Shew'd heaviness of soul that ill could bear to speak.

Onward she mov'd, the obsequious knights precede,
And to the presence of their sovereign lead:
Then, while through all expectant wonder ran,
Her weeping eyes she dried, and thus began.

'Pardon, great sire, a wretch who dares intrude
'To damp with ill-tim'd sadness others' good:
'Wrong'd as I am, and doom'd to rue the day
'When my mule's bridle first was borne away,
'Still, still I wail, nor shall my sorrows end
'Till my long wanderings lead me to a friend,
'A friend whose sword that bridle shall regain;
'To him my love I vow, the guerdon of his pain.
'And know, this fearful enterprize to try
'Asks the full might of hardiest chivalry;
'Whither shall hardiest chivalry resort,
'Or where be found, if not in Arthur's court?
'List then, great sovereign, to a damsel's prayers!
'And may that man who, past his brethren, dares,

'Stand forth my champion, and the deed assay;
'No guide he needs to regulate his way;
'Him to the scene of strife the mule shall lead,
'And may his conquering arms receive the promis'd meed!'

She ceas'd; to claim the emprize all seem'd to turn,
But most the Seneschal was seen to burn;
Sir Kay the Seneschal first seeks the throne,
And arrogates the achievement for his own.
First were his claims, and could not be gainsaid;
Forthwith he turns him to the stranger maid,
And vows, though from the world's extremest shore,
The long-lost rein uninjur'd to restore;
Yet hopes, dear earnest of his future bliss,
His lips may steal one spirit-stirring kiss.
The cautious fair, retiring with disdain,
Forbids all freedom till he bring the rein;

Yet, lest her knight desponding should depart,
Then she confirms for his her person and her heart.
Officious to comply, low louts Sir Kay,
Girds on his glittering arms, and speeds away.
Scarce had the neighbouring forest's shadowy height
Clos'd in its womb the mule-bestriding knight,
When, gaunt with famine, and athirst for blood,
Pards, tigers, and the lions' griesly brood,
In droves burst forth from that disastrous laire,
And with loud hideous roarings fill'd the air.
Wo worth the champion now, who sore afraid
Bewail'd that heedless boast so lately made:
Fled was all hope of meed, all promis'd bliss;
Vain in his sight the fairest fair one's kiss:
Till, as the insatiate monsters reach'd the mule,
At once the roar was hush'd, the rage grew cool;
Couch'd at his hoof each suppliant savage lay,
And with his rough tongue lick'd the dust away,

Then slunk back trembling to his drear abode:
Sir Kay, reviv'd in heart, pursued his road.
'Scap'd from the beasts of prey, in hope secur'd,
New terrours yet remain'd to be endur'd.
The track now steeply shelving form'd a vale,
Whose gloom might make the stoutest knight turn pale.
'Twas darkness all; save that at times the breath
Of fiery dragons, pestilent as death,
Flash'd in upon the obscurity of night
With lurid blasts of intermitting light,
By momentary fits the pathway show'd,
And led the astonish'd warriour on his road.
In the deep bottom of this hideous dell
Swarm'd snakes, a countless brood, and scorpions fell.
Above, the unfetter'd tempest rav'd amain,
And in a deafening torrent pour'd the rain:
Shook to their centre by the whirlwind's sweep
Huge rocky fragments thunder'd down the steep:

Keen was the cold, as in one piercing wind
A thousand icy winters blew combin'd;
Yet such the emotions of the champion's heart,
Fast flow'd the dews of sweat from every part:
Him, howsoe'er, the guardian mule convey'd
Safe through the perils of the dreadful glade,
And, onward pacing, reach'd at length the marge
Of a black doleful river, deep and large.
Slow roll'd the sullen waves, nor aught was there
Of bridge or bark the adventurous knight to bear:
Shap'd like a plank, and stretching many a rood,
Alone one bar of iron spann'd the flood.
Here paus'd Sir Kay, here deem'd all valour vain,
Here turn'd his mule, despairing of the rein.
Back through the vale perforce his passage lay,
Back through the vale he hied with sore dismay;
Back through the forest, wild with many a beast
That howl'd behind, as baffled of their feast:

In vain they sprang; the mule's repulsive charm
Shrank up their strength, and sav'd the knight from harm.

Now from afar the assembled court beheld
Their champion slowly pacing o'er the field:
His downcast looks his ill success confess'd,
And each was prompt to taunt him with a jest.
The King himself stepp'd forth his knight to lead
On to the plighted kiss, the conqueror's meed;
Knights, squires, and dames, the general banter caught,
And mock'd the unlucky Seneschal to nought.
Speechless awhile he stood, the sport of all,
Then hid his face and hurried from the hall.

Wo was Sir Kay; but in more deep despair
Sunk, at this scene, the disappointed fair.
Cast from all hope, what bitter tears she shed!
How rent the clustering honours of her head!

Mov'd with her wail, advanc'd Sir Gawaine forth;
Calm he approach'd her, confident of worth;
Pledg'd his true word to seek the scene of strife,
And in her cause devote his sword and life.
Such promise sure some recompense might claim,
Nor tinge the purest fair one's cheek with shame?
'Twas that foretaste the Seneschal had press'd;
And what that was, he ween'd the lady guess'd.
The damsel blush'd: the dangerous warfare known,
All hope of succour thence more desperate grown,
Who could refuse to knight so kind, so brave,
Aught that a manly modesty would crave?
Known be it then, the inspiring kiss was seiz'd;
Blithe was the knight, nor was the maid displeas'd:
He mounts the mule, impatient of delay,
And hies him to the forest's side away.
Loud, as he pass'd, the bristling lions roar'd;
The knight with dauntless scorn oppos'd his sword:

Loud hiss'd the enormous snakes, and onward roll'd;
And for the fight prepar'd Sir Gawaine bold:
But needless all: the mule's o'ermastering might
Turn'd back the cowering suppliants from the knight.
Now on the margin of the stream he stood,
Where the huge bar lay stretch'd athwart the flood;
There for a moment paus'd in secret prayer,
Consign'd the event to Heaven's protecting care,
Then urg'd his mule: upon the bar's strait bound
The sure-pac'd beast full scanty footing found;
While, rising fast, the watery waste beneath
Roll'd on its roaring billows, big with death;
Dash'd o'er the knight, as conscious of a foe,
Then wide disparting yawn'd in hideous gulphs below.
Fix'd as a rock the assaulting surge he bore,
Slow mov'd the sure-pac'd mule, and gain'd the further shore.
Hard by its bank a castle was descried,
With wondrous art contriv'd and fortified;

There rang'd, as palisades, in order due,
Four hundred beam-like stakes assail'd his view;
Each on its pointed summit gory red
Bore high in air a mangled warriour's head,
Save one alone; whose top, uncrown'd and pure,
Seem'd to demand that ghastly garniture.
Girt were the fortress' walls with moats profound,
And brimming torrents roll'd impetuous round;
Whilst, like a millstone, on its central base
Revolv'd with ceaseless course the whole enormous mass;
Swift as a top, when some impatient boy
With frequent lash speeds on the circling toy.
Bridge there was none, whereon he might assay
To vault with dexterous bound, and force his future way.
Long time he gaz'd, and fix'd his mind to die
Rather than back return with infamy:
Still scann'd the towers that never ceas'd to turn,
As bent some gate, some entrance, to discern.

One pass he spies: the goaded mule he galls,
Leaps the wide moat, and lights within the walls.
Within, no creature, as it seem'd, remain'd;
Waste solitude and deathlike silence reign'd.
Unpeopled windows, vacant streets, declare
Strange recent cause of desolation there.
Long mus'd the knight: at length he chanc'd to spy
A dwarf who mark'd his course with curious eye.
'Where won,' Sir Gawaine cries, 'thy lord, thy dame?
'Report their will, their honours, and their name?'
Eager he spoke; the silent dwarf withdrew;
The knight pursued, and bore his quarry still in view;
When from a craggy cave, his dark abode,
Foul and deform'd a monstrous giant strode;
Deform'd his limbs, and bristly was his hair,
And in his hand a ponderous axe he bare;
Yet still his looks some courtesy express'd,
As thus the dauntless Gawaine he address'd.

'Praise to thy courage, desperate knight!' he cried,
'Though here that courage be but ill applied:
'Those griesly heads which palisade the gate
'Might well have made thee wise ere yet too late:
''Twill pity me, in sooth, to see thee fall,
'For know, this enterprize is death to all.
'Take, ne'ertheless, such helps as I can give,
'And feast the little time thou hast to live.'
He spake, and straight convey'd his wondering guest
Where the pil'd table bow'd beneath the feast,
And with a kindly coarse solicitude
Will'd him restore his wasted powers with food;
Then to a bower for rest prepar'd, he leads
The dauntless knight, and thus again proceeds.
'There sleep, Sir Knight! yet ere thou press thy bed
'Smite from my shoulders broad my towering head;
'Nor shall this bounty lack the destin'd meed,
'Myself to-morrow will repay thy deed.'

Swift, as he spoke, Sir Gawaine whirl'd his blade,
And at his feet the griesly mass was laid:
What words can paint his wonder, to behold,
As the huge head along the pavement roll'd,
The trunk pursue, the sever'd parts unite,
And the whole man pass suddenly from sight.

Calm on the fearful scene Sir Gawaine gaz'd,
For stedfast was his soul, though much amaz'd;
And, at the morrow's menace nought dismay'd,
Calm on a couch his wearied limbs he laid;
There gathering slumber soon o'erspreads his eyes,
And lapt in sweet tranquillity he lies.

Now rose the morn, and, to his promise true,
Nigh with his ponderous axe the giant drew,
And warn'd the knight, still stretch'd upon his bed,
To yield the plighted forfeit of his head:
Nor paus'd the knight; superiour to his fate,
His word was pledg'd, he scorn'd to hesitate;

When lo! with alter'd guise, that joy confess'd,
The griesly monster clasp'd him to his breast,
And, 'Fair befall thy hardiment!' he cried,
'Twas but to prove thy manhood:—thou art tried.'
'Say then,' the knight return'd, 'doth aught remain?
'Where lies my way? what bars me from the rein?'
'Ere the sun sink,' the giant stern replied,
'All may be known, and thou be satisfied;
'Meanwhile thine hour of utmost need is nigh,
'Call all thy valour forth, prevail, or die.'

'Twas now full noon; and in the field of fight
Arm'd at all points arriv'd the dauntless knight:
Fix'd on the opposing quarter of the plain
A lion, mad with anger, gnash'd his chain;
Smear'd were his jaws with foam, the earth he tore,
And the wide plain resounded with his roar:
Anon the advancing warriour met his view,
His chains fell off, and on his foe he flew;

On his broad shoulder fix'd the cumbrous beast,
And tugg'd, and tore the hauberk from his breast.
Long was the fight, a fearful tale to tell;
Suffice to say the enormous savage fell:
More huge, more fierce, a second straight succeeds;
Beneath the champion's arm a second bleeds:
Then further foe came not: the knight again
Demands the conqueror's meed, the destin'd rein.
The giant answers nought, but leads his guest
Where the pil'd table bends beneath the feast,
And with a clumsy kindness, oft renew'd,
Relates how faltering nature thrives by food;
Then reconducts him to the field of fight,
And brings his foeman forth, a bold but ruthless knight.
E'en he it was, whose yet unvanquish'd hand
Had fenc'd with many a stake the castled strand,
And, in dire proof his might was peerless found,
Their points with slaughter'd warriours' heads had crown'd:

Now with Sir Gawaine doom'd his force to try,
And strive once more for death or victory,
For each their grim conductor bids prepare
A stately steed, caparison'd for war.
The champions mount, each grasps a beamy spear;
Each adverse wheels to take his full career;
At once impell'd the forceful steeds advance,
Bursts the strong girth, and snaps the shivering lance,
Saddles and knights are backward borne to dust,
So firm they sat, so furious was their thrust.
Uprise the prostrate foes in ireful mood,
And fierce the combat burns, on foot renew'd.
Aloft in air their ponderous swords they wield,
And sparks of fire flash thick from either shield:
With the fell dint their batter'd arms resound,
Yet neither chief grows slack, nor yields his ground.
For two long hours the twain with equal might
Maintain'd the dubious issue of the fight,

Till at the last, as if that stroke combin'd
The united energy of all his mind,
Full on his foeman's casque Sir Gawaine's blade
Resistless driven, a wasteful entrance made;
Down to the circlet clave the griding steel,
And prone on earth the senseless warriour fell.

So ceas'd the fight; for knighthood's laws decree
Death's instant dole, or yielded victory:
And now the conqueror's hand had nigh unlac'd
The well-wrought bands with which his helm was brac'd,
When the faint knight confess'd the unequal strife,
Gave up his vanquish'd sword, and begg'd for life.

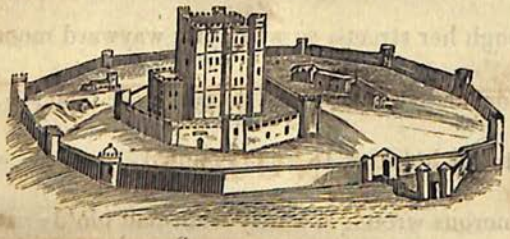
Here clos'd the achievement; the victorious knight
Now claims the rein by uncontested right:
But the fair mistress of the waste domain
Still hopes from beauty what from force was vain,
And trusts by amorous gallantry to find
Those claims relinquish'd and that right resign'd.

Fill'd with these views the attendant dwarf she sends;
Before the knight the dwarf respectful bends;
Kind greetings bears as to his lady's guest,
And prays his presence to adorn her feast.
The knight delays not: on a bed design'd
With gay magnificence the fair reclin'd;
High o'er her head, on silver columns rais'd,
With broidering gems her proud pavilion blaz'd.
Herself, a paragon in every part,
Seem'd sovereign beauty deck'd with comeliest art.
With a sweet smile of condescending pride
She seats the courteous Gawaine by her side,
Scans with assiduous glance each rising wish,
Feeds from her food, the partner of her dish,
With soft reproach extols his conquering sword,
Calls him her dear destroyer and her lord,
Tells how herself, and she, the maid forlorn,
Sprang from one sire, of one dear mother born,

Owns that her hand the fatal prize detain'd,
Now by her guest's unrivall'd arm regain'd;
Till, weening well his bosom prepossess'd
With her smooth wiles, she thus her hopes express'd:
'Sweet lord!' she cried, 'still pass thine hours with me!
'Nor press too far the claims of victory!
'Mark this imperial castle's vast design;
'Twice twenty more, save two alone, are mine:
'Take these, with all their wealth, these wide domains,
'And hold their sovereign's heart in willing chains:
'Prize to a lord for bravery passing peer,
'She deems it honour to submit her here;
'How lost soe'er, she shuns the thought of wo,
'And finds in thee a guardian, not a foe.'
She paus'd; the stedfast champion nothing swerv'd,
But the firm purpose of his soul preserv'd:
By beauty unseduc'd, unbrib'd by gain,
Calm he persists to claim the long-sought rein.

The long-sought rein reluctantly restor'd,
Again the sure-pac'd mule sustains its lord:
When, as he mounts, amaz'd at once he hears
Strange shouts of clamorous joy assail his ears:
Sad wights were these, and guiltless doom'd to die
Beneath their dame's capricious tyranny;
For through her streets, so will'd her wayward mood,
Fierce lions daily roam'd, and sought their food;
Hence, to his house as to a jail confin'd,
Each timorous wretch in lonely want had pin'd;
Now, freed from fear, they throng the castled strand,
Prompt to embrace their bless'd deliverer's hand.
To Carduel's towers return'd, with wild delight
The enraptur'd damsel hails her conquering knight:
Just to his toils her willing tribute pays
Of thankfulness unfeign'd, and boundless praise.
Soon, howsoe'er, she casts to speed away;
Nor Arthur nor his Queen can win her stay:

Much they entreat her to remain their guest
Till the full period of the days of feast,
But all in vain; the damsel quits the hall,
Mounts on her mule, and bids farewell to all.



NOTES.

NOTES

TO

AUCASSIN AND NICOLETTE.

It may not be amiss to preface the following Notes by observing, that most of the head- and tail-pieces throughout the volumes are intended to be something more than mere ornaments, being composed with attention to the costume of the 12th and 13th centuries. They were executed, chiefly after the translator's sketches, by Messrs. Thomas and John Bewick of Newcastle-upon-Tyne; the younger of whom died while these pages were preparing for the press.

The compositions of the Trouveurs now extant, whether *Lays* or *Fabliaux*, are so universally metrical, that M. Le Grand remarks the present tale is probably the only known exception to this rule, being a mixture

of prose and verse. The prose, which forms the body of the narration, was intended to be declaimed, and the pieces of poetry with which it was interspersed, seem to have answered the purpose of the airs in our operas. In the original accordingly the copyist has inserted 'this part is to be sung,' 'this part is to be declaimed.' In one manuscript the airs are noted; and M. Le Grand remarks, that this is the only example he has been able to discover of the species of musical composition by which the metrical romances were always accompanied.

Page 13, Line 11. '*Awhile the Viscount hop'd, &c.*' In the original, the Viscount represents to Aucassin the joys of Paradise and the pains of hell; to which Aucassin replies by ridiculing his paradise, which he considers as the habitation of none but dirty monks and priests and hermits; and declares his resolution of going to the devil, with whom he is sure of finding good company: kings, valiant knights and faithful squires, minstrels and jugglers, and, above all, his Nicolette. It has been already observed, that our ancestors in the *good old times* were not eminent for their pure taste in wit or morality.

Page 15, Line 7. '*Bold burghers, mounted on the*
'*embattled towers, &c.*'

The following description of an ancient castle, taken principally from Dr. Henry's History of England, may serve as a comment on this passage, and explain the general scenery of the tale.

The situation of ancient castles was usually on an eminence, and near a river. The whole site of the castle was surrounded by a deep and broad ditch, sometimes dry, and sometimes filled with water. On the edge of this stood the wall, about eight or ten feet thick, and between twenty and thirty feet high, with a parapet, and a kind of embrasures, called *crenelles*, on the top. On this wall, at proper distances, were built square towers, two or three stories high, containing apartments for the principal officers, and adjoining to these were lodgings for the common servants or retainers, granaries, storehouses, and other necessary offices. On the top of the wall, and on the flat roofs of these buildings, stood the defenders of the castle when it was besieged, and thence discharged arrows, darts, and stones on the besiegers Before the great gate was an outwork, called a *barbacan*, or *antemural*, which was a strong and high wall with turrets, designed for the defence of the gate and drawbridge. The gate was also defended by a tower on each side,

and rooms over the passage, which was closed by thick folding doors of oak, often plated with iron, and by an iron portcullis or grate let down from above. Within this outward wall was a large open space or court, called the *outer bayley*, in which stood commonly a church or chapel. Within this outer bayley was another ditch, wall, and gate, with their towers, inclosing the *inner bayley*; within which was the principal hill and tower, called the *keep* or *dungeon*. This tower, the palace of the prince or baron, and residence of the constable or governor, was a large square fabrick four or five stories high, having small windows in very thick walls, which rendered the apartments within it dark and gloomy. In it was the great hall, in which the owner displayed his hospitality, by entertaining his numerous friends and followers. The lower part consisted of dark rooms or vaults, often used for the confinement of prisoners; and hence, it has been inferred, this principal tower derived its name of *dungeon*. (See Henry, Vol. III. page 460. 4to. edit.) The *dungeon*, however, (*donjon*, *dunjo*,) more probably receives its appellation from its situation, *in duno, seu colle,—on an eminence*; and as the most gloomy part of this gloomy edifice was employed as a prison, it has

communicated its own name to all dismal places of confinement. (See Preface to Grose's Antiquities, Vol. I. pages 10. 12. edit. 1783.)

The following lines in Lydgate's 'Fall of Princes,' (Book VIII. chap. 24.) give support to this etymology of *dungeon*:—

'Thus, of Bretayn translated was the sonne,*
'*Up to the rich sterry bright dongeon*,
'Astronomers wel rehearse konne,
'Called Arthur's constellation.'—

A representation of an ancient castle, correct enough to illustrate the above note, is given as the tail-piece to 'The Mule without a Bridle,' after a plate in Grose's Antiquities, though with the omission of the *inner* bayley and wall, a fortification by no means universal to such fastnesses.

The reader should, indeed, bear in mind, what the author of that work observes, (Preface, page 8,) that 'the general shape or plan of these castles depended 'entirely on the caprice of the architects, or the form 'of the ground intended to be occupied: neither do 'they seem to have confined themselves to any parti-'cular figure in their towers; square, round, and poly-

* Arthur, after the fatal battle of Camlan.

'gonal, oftentimes occurring in the original parts of 'the same building.'

Page 17, Line 8. '*Ere Aucassin was dight, with 'hauberk on.*'

Mail armour, of which the hauberk is a species, and which derived its name from *maille*, a French word for *mesh*, was of two kinds: *plate* or *scale* mail (squamata vestis), and *chain* mail (hamata vestis). It was originally used for the protection of the body only, reaching no lower than the knees; it was shaped like a carter's smock-frock, and bound round the waist by a girdle. Gloves and hose of mail were afterwards added, and a hood, which when necessary was drawn over the head, leaving the face alone uncovered. To protect the skin from the impression of the iron net-work of the chain mail, a quilted lining was employed, which, however, was insufficient; and the bath was used to efface the marks of the armour. The engraving prefixed to 'The Order of Knighthood,' exhibits the scale mail, the plate and scale mail conjointly, and the chain mail.

The hauberk was a complete covering of double chain mail. It consisted of a hood joined to a jacket, with sleeves, breeches, stockings, and shoes; to which were added gloves or gauntlets of the same construc-

tion. Some hauberks opened before like a modern coat: others were closed like a shirt.

The chain mail of which they were composed was formed by a number of iron links, each link having others inserted into it, the whole exhibiting a kind of net-work, of which (in some instances at least) the meshes were circular, with every link separately riveted.

The hauberk was proof against the most violent blow of a sword; but the point of a lance might pass through the meshes, or drive the wires into the flesh. To guard against this, a thick and well-stuffed doublet was worn underneath, called a *gambeson*, under which was commonly added an iron breast-plate. Hence, (or rather, perhaps, from the usage of the 14th and following centuries, when a cuirass was frequently worn *over* a shirt of mail,) the expression of 'piercing both plate 'and mail,' so common in our earlier poets.

In France, none but persons of a certain estate, called *un fief de haubert*, were permitted to wear a hauberk, which was the armour of a knight. Esquires might only wear a simple coat of mail, without the hood and hose. (See Grose on Ancient Armour.) Le Grand remarks that Aucassin, not being knighted, could not have appeared at a *tournament* with the hau-

berk: perhaps the forms relating to military dress were relaxed in times of real service. On a journey the hauberk was rolled up, and carried behind the saddle.

Mail armour continued in general use in Europe, till about the year 1300, when it was gradually supplanted by *plate armour*, or suits consisting of large pieces or plates of solid iron, adapted to the different parts of the body. Conjointly with this, however, it was still often worn, as late even as the 16th century. Mail armour is at this day used in the East Indies, (See Grose's Asiatick Armour,) and also by the Circassians.

A representation of *plate armour*, with its cuirass, and its greeves, (iron boots,) is given in the head-piece to 'The Vale of False Lovers.' Grose (Ancient Armour, page 74, note,) thinks it most probable that plate armour might have been used by some princes and great men from the time of the Romans, though not commonly adopted.

Page 18, Line 1. '*His shield, &c.*'

The form of a horseman's shield was most commonly triangular; wide at the top for the protection of the breast, and tapering to the bottom for the sake of lightness. Shields were generally made of wood, covered with boiled leather, or some similar substance.

To secure them in some sort from being cut through by the sword, they were surrounded with a hoop of metal. On the inside of the shield were one or more loops of leather, or else wooden handles, through which the left hand, or hand and arm, were passed, previous to combat: though sometimes the shield seems, even in battle, to have been only slung round the neck by a leathern thong.

Page 18, Line 3. '*Now right, now left, he whirls*
'*his sword on high.*'

The swords were for the most part long, broad, and so heavy, that to give full effect to a stroke, it was requisite to use both hands.

Page 19, Line 1. '*Then by the nasal seis'd, &c.*'

The helmet originally consisted only of a sort of scull-cap, from which sometimes a plate of iron, called a *nasal*, descended to the extremity of the nose. Many helmets of this sort appear in the engravings of the tapestry representing William the Conqueror's expedition against England, published by Montfaucon in his Monarchie Françoise. The reader will see in the tail-piece to 'The Knight and the Sword,' in the second volume, the exact form of a helmet with a nasal.

The helmet, in its improved state, was composed of two parts; the *headpiece*, which was strengthened

within by several circles of iron; and the *visor* or *vent-ail*, which (as the names imply) was a sort of grating to *see* or *breathe* through, so contrived as by sliding in a groove, or turning on a pivot, to be raised or lowered at pleasure. Some helmets had a further improvement called a *bever*; from *beuveur*, *a drinker*, or from the Italian *bevere*, *to drink*.

Helmets varied very considerably in their shape in different ages. In the 13th century, (the time when the greater part of the Fabliaux were composed,) they were mostly made with a *flat* crown: a form of all others the worst calculated for defence. *Rounded* crowns (which were not unknown before,) grew into use afterwards; and crests and plumes were added for distinction or ornament.

To secure the helmet from the possibility of falling or being struck off, it was tied by several laces to the meshes of the hauberk; consequently when a knight was overthrown, it was necessary to undo these laces before he could be put to death: though this was sometimes effected by lifting up the skirt of the hauberk, and stabbing him in the belly; of which an instance occurs in 'The Knight and the Sword,' near the conclusion of the tale. The instrument of death was a small dagger, worn on the right side.

Page 20, Line 10. '*Palfreys, or dogs, or falcons*
'*train'd to flight.*'

The chase being the principal and almost the sole amusement of the feudal nobility, dogs and falcons were among the presents usually made, even to crowned heads.

Page 20, Line 11. '*Or choose you sumptuous furs,*
'*of vair, or gray.*'

Furs constituted one of the most costly articles of dress, and would therefore naturally compose part of a nobleman's ransome. Of these, the ermine and the sable were considered as the most valuable: the vair and the gray stood next in estimation. The vair was the skin of a species of squirrel, gray on the back, and white on the throat and belly. M. Le Grand concurs with other writers in supposing the fur derives its name of *vair* from this *variety* of its colours. A mantle lined with many of these skins of vair, exhibiting the form in which heralds delineate the variegations, is given as the tail-piece to 'The Canonesses and Gray 'Nuns.' The skins of vair were, according to Guil. le Breton, imported from Hungary. What particular animal furnished the *gris* or *gray*, is not clearly known.

Page 24, Line 16. *'But their long garb the glitter-*
'ing blades conceal'd.

The word in the original, for which *garb* is here substituted, is *cappe.* This, which was also spelt *chappe* and *cape,* was a large tunick reaching to the feet, and worn over the other garments by both sexes. It was put on like a shirt, having a wide plaited opening called a *goule,* or *gouleron,* and seems to have been originally without sleeves. This dress is still worn by some of the monastick orders; whose habits, however ridiculous they may appear to us, exhibit a faithful copy of the national dresses used at the time of their foundation. Louis the VII. prohibited the courtezans of Paris from wearing the *cappe,* that they might not be confounded with the modest part of the sex. In general the *cappe* was only worn in the open air; and those designed for rainy weather were provided with a hood.

Page 32, Line 14. *'Our gentle valet Aucassin be-*
'tide.'

The title of *valet* or *varlet* was given to all young men of noble birth who had not been knighted. In Villehardouin, the son of the Eastern emperor is called the *Varlet of Constantinople.*

Page 35, Line 12. '*Thrust deftly back the dislo-*
'*cated bone*, &c.'

Some degree of chirurgical and medical knowledge was considered, during the middle ages, as a very necessary female accomplishment; and, while the occupations and amusements of the men naturally led to bruises and broken bones, it was likely that the ladies would acquire sufficient experience by the casualties that occurred in their own families. It accordingly appears from the Romances that many women of high birth were consulted in preference to the most learned professors; and it is probable that their attentive and compassionate solicitude may have frequently proved more efficacious than the nostrums of the faculty, even when assisted by the magical power of amulets, or the more orthodox energy of holy water. The male professors in medicine during these ages, were either ecclesiasticks, Greeks, or Jews. These last, if they were not very skilful, were singularly confident, since they consented to exercise their art under the most discouraging restrictions. By the laws of Jerusalem promulgated by Godfrey of Bouillon, it is provided, that 'if any '*physician shall fail to cure a slave* (these were infidel 'prisoners) *he shall be condemned to pay for the said* '*slave, or to substitute another in his place: if a Chris-*

'*tian die under his hands, his goods shall be confiscated,* '*and he shall be hanged, having been first whipped, and* '*conducted to the gallows with an urinal in his hand, as* '*a warning to others.*' (Targioni Viaggi per la Toscana, Vol. II.) The Jews usually studied in the Arabian universities in Spain, where it was supposed that magick was openly taught; and for this reason were universally suspected and persecuted. One circumstance in their mode of practice appears wise: they employed their attention only on particular parts of medicine, and styled themselves 'physicians for the 'cure of wounds,' 'physicians for the cure of frac-'tures,' &c, &c.

Page 37, Line 2. '*And gain the spacious port of* '*strong Torelore.*'

In the original, the description of the country of Torelore forms a most absurd episode, which is suppressed by M. Le Grand. The king is in bed, and pretends to be in labour, when Aucassin arrives; and at the same time the queen, at the head of a female army, is making war with eggs, soft cheeses, and roasted apples. Aucassin puts a speedy end to this war, and by a severe beating exacts from the monarch a promise to abolish these stupid customs.

Page 45, Line 6. '*Gave twenty marks of silver to the maid.*'

It was so difficult to estimate with tolerable correctness the relative value of the different coins which at this time circulated in the several kingdoms of Europe, and even in the several provinces of the same kingdom, that it was usual to make large payments by weight: and it is for this reason that we find such frequent mention of *marks* of silver. The weight of the mark varied considerably in France; but that of Troyes was most generally adopted, on account of the ancient and considerable fairs held in Champagne. This was introduced into England at the time of the Norman conquest; and was equal to two-thirds of the Tower pound, which was coined into twenty shillings: consequently the *mark* was worth thirteen shillings and four-pence of that time, or about ten pounds of our present money.

NOTES

TO

THE LAY OF THE LITTLE BIRD.

TYRWHITT defines a *Lay* to be 'a species of serious 'narrative poetry, of a moderate length, in a simple 'style and light metre.' It has been observed in the preface, that the *Lay* differed from the *Fabliau* in some circumstance of its musical accompaniment. In what this difference consisted it is perhaps impossible now to explain. From the uniform language of the minstrels it would seem that the *Lays* were *sung* from beginning to end, and that the *Fabliaux* were declaimed: yet M. Le Grand could not find any manuscripts of Lays accompanied by *notes*, while that of a very long Fabliau (Aucassin and Nicolette) is (in its metrical parts) *noted* throughout. See page 151, 152.

This tale, as M. Le Grand observes, seems to be imitated from Pilpay. In the Indian fable, a countryman is possessed of a rose-bush, which every day pro-

duces a bud. A nightingale comes on several following days to peck the bud, and prevents its blowing. He is at length caught in a trap, but obtains his life by his entreaties, and out of gratitude indicates to the countryman a treasure hidden at the foot of the tree. In the English translation of Pilpay, the story varies somewhat from the above account.

Among Lydgate's works Mr. Warton mentions a poem called the *Chorle and the Bird, translated from a pamflete in Frensche.* This poem is also noticed in Tyrwhitt's introductory Discourse to Chaucer's Canterbury Tales, § xxxviii. page 183; and is included in the list of Lydgate's works appended to Speght's Chaucer: but the translator has not the opportunity of ascertaining its relation to the French Fabliau.

The reader has already been referred in the preface to a collection of Fabliaux, published in 1756, from the manuscripts. As these volumes are scarce, and this is the first tale in the present work which will be found there, two or three occasional quotations may not be unacceptable.—It opens thus:—

LI LAIS DE L'OISELET.

' Il avint jadis à un temps,
' Bien a passé plus de cent ans,

' Qu'il estoit un riches vilains,
' De son nom ne sui pas certains;
' Mais riches iert de grant maniere
' De prez, de bois, et de riviere,
' De tout ce qu'affiert à ric e home;
' Le dire vous en viel la somme.
' Il avoit un manoir si bel,
' N'a borc, n'a vile, n'a chastel;
' Et se je vos en veil conter,
' En tout le mont n'ot son per,
' Ne si bel ne si delitable.
' Li contes vos sembleroit fable,
' Qui vous en diroit la façon;
' Je ne cuit que jamais face on
' Tel donjon, ne si riche tour.
' La riviere couroit entour,
' Qui tout enclooit le pourpris;
' Dedens ot vergier de haut pris,
' Qui d'yaue et d'air estoit enclos.
' Cil qui le fist ne fu pas fos,
' Ains fu un chevaliers gentis;
' Aprés le pere l'ot li fis;
' Puis le vendi à cel vilain;
' Ainsis ala de main en main;

'Bien savez que par malvais hoir
'Dechieent viles et manoir.

. . . . . .

'Cil qui le fist fut moult sachans:
'Il fu tos fais par nigromance,
'Si faisoit-on mainte esprouvance.'

In justice to the reader and to M. Le Grand, it is proper, however, to remark, that the correspondence between his abridgements and the publication of 1756 will not always be found so exact as in the above instance. For this his preface furnishes the following satisfactory reason:—'In my examination of manu-'scripts,' says he, 'there were scarcely any Fabliaux 'of which I did not discover several copies, and these 'copies almost always differed from each other. 'Sometimes, indeed, they had nothing in common but 'the title; sometimes the foundation of the tale was 'the same when every verse in it was different.—My 'practice has often been, therefore, following one 'copy principally, to transplant into it any pleasing 'additions or variations with which the other copies 'might furnish me.'

Page 53, Line 6. '*And chas'd the hovering agony 'of death.*'

From this, and many other passages in the Fabliaux,

it appears that our ancestors attributed very extraordinary virtues to spices, and considered them as essential to luxury. Among the delights of the Land of Cokaygne (Warton, Vol. I. page 10.) are the following:—

'In the praer (field) is a tree
'Swithe likeful for to se,
'The rote is *gingeur* and *galingale*,*
'The siouns beth al *sedwale*.†
'Trie *maces* beth the flure,
'The rind, *canel* (*cinnamon*) of swete odure:
'The frute, *gilofre* ‡ of gode smakke.'

Page 53, Line 18. '*And through the livelong year*
shut out the beam.'

A river, a fountain, a pine, a few flowers, and an orchard containing a mixture of fruit and forest trees, seem to have afforded all the materials which, in the opinion of our ancestors, were necessary for composing a beautiful garden. The pine was a particular favourite: every fountain in romance is shaded by them; and Charlemagne in his Capitularies, amongst

* Sweet cyperus.

† The herb seduwal or valerian.

‡ The same with clowe gilofre (clou de girofle—French); the clove.

other directions for the management of his farms, particularly insists on the planting of fruit trees, laurels, and pines.

Page 54, Line 7. '*Match'd with these strains of*
'*linked sweetness wrought.*'

See Milton's l'Allegro, line 139:

'In notes, with many a winding bout
'Of linked sweetness long drawn out.'

Page 54, Line 15, to Line 5 of Page 55.

'*Listen, listen, to my lay!*

. . . . . .

'*Hear, and heed me, and be bless'd!*'

The original is as follows:—

'Li oisiax dist en son latin *
"Entendez (fait il) à mon lai
"Et chevalier et clerc et lai
"Qui vous entremetez d'amors,
"Et qui en souffrez les dolors:
"Et à vos le di, damoiselles,
"Qui i estes avenans et beles,"

. . . . . .

M. Le Grand has suppressed the remainder of this

* The word *latin* seems to have been used by the early French writers as equivalent to *language* in its widest signification. See La Combe's Dict. du Vieux Langage.

song, in which the bird recommends great fervency in *devotion* and in *love;* God, he says, hates those hearts which are hard and hypocritical: so does Love. God suffers himself to be softened by prayer: so does Love. In short, he assures us that by serving both with zeal we shall ensure happiness in this world and the joys of paradise in the next. Froissart, the historian, who has left a large collection of amorous poems, informs us in his preface, that he undertook to compose them with the help of *God* and of *Love.*

Page 55, Line 6. . . . . '*but when he spied*
'*The carle draw near*'—'qui fel et convoitous estoit,'
'*With alter'd tone he cried*—

" Car laisse ton corre riviere!
" Donions, manoirs, tors, car dechiez!
" Matissiez flors! herbes sechiez!
" Arbres car lessiez le porter!
" Ci se souloient deporter
" Gentis dames et chevalier,
" Qui la fontaine avoient chier,
" Qui a mon chant se delitoient,
" Et par amors miex en amoient:
" Si en faisoient les largesces,
" Les cortoisies, les prouesces
" Maintenoient chevaleries: &c."

NOTES

TO

THE PRIEST WHO HAD A MOTHER IN SPITE OF HIMSELF.

Page 64, Line 5. '*And linings soft of lamb or 'squirrel's skin.*'

The use and estimation of furs has been already noticed. Furs were the common coverings of beds, besides forming the principal and most distinctive part of dress. The more precious furs, as *ermine* and *sable*, were reserved for kings, knights, and the principal nobility of both sexes. Persons of an inferior rank contented themselves with the *vair*, (probably the Hungarian squirrel,) and the *gris* or *gray*. The lower orders of citizens and burgesses with the common squirrel and lamb skins. The peasants wore cat skins, badger skins, &c. The mantles of our kings and peers,

and the furred robes of the several classes of our municipal officers, are the remains of this once universal fashion.

Page 66, Line 8. '*Two hundred sure, and crowds of meaner sort.*'

The enormous number of clients here represented as assisting at a bishop's court, will not appear surprising to those who consider the almost unlimited power of the clergy during the middle ages. Their jurisdiction extended not only over the members of their own body, but comprised all persons who had taken the cross, all pilgrims, widows, and orphans, and *clerks*, a class of men which was extremely numerous because highly privileged. The causes of which they took cognizance were usury, simony, adultery, schism, heresy, sacrilege; in short of all crimes which were *sinful*, or which had the most distant relation to any of the sacraments: as the settlements on brides, widows, younger children, wills, &c. &c.

Page 70, Line 8. '*Villain or clerk, nor think the bargain dear.*'

It is well known that the word *villain*, which at present is applied to a vicious character, originally signified nothing more than a *country servant*. In the

feudal times, the culture of the lands was executed by three sorts of persons. The first were the small allodial proprietors, who were freemen, though they sometimes voluntarily became the vassals of their more opulent neighbours, whose power was necessary for their protection. The other two classes were the *serfs* and the *villains*, both of which were slaves.

The *serfs* were in the lowest state of slavery. They did not enjoy, like the Africans in our colonies, the privilege of marrying whom they pleased, or of transmitting their little property to their children or friends. All the fruits of their labour belonged to the master whose land they tilled, and by whom they were fed and clothed. Their only recompense was a bare permission to exist. The *villains* were less miserable. Their situation seems to have resembled that of the Russian peasants at this day. They were, like the serfs, attached to the soil; and were transferred with it by purchase: but they only paid a fixed rent to the landlord, and had a right to dispose of any surplus that might arise from their industry.

With regard to the term *clerk*, it was of very extensive import. It comprehended, indeed, originally, such persons only as bore the clerical tonsure, amongst

whom, however, might be found a multitude of married persons, artisans or others: but in process of time a much wider criterion was established; every one that could read being accounted (in England at least) a *clerk* or *clericus*, and allowed the benefit of clerkship.

NOTES

TO

THE CANONESSES AND GRAY NUNS.

It appears in the course of the original Fabliau, that these *gray nuns* were Cistertians or Bernardines, a branch of the Benedictine order. The present dress of the Bernardines is white; but M. Le Grand observes that in the ages when the Fabliaux were written, they wore garments of the natural colour of the wool. These would appear grayish, at least when not quite clean.

Page 75, Line 12. '*And all for justice sued, &c.*' M. Le Grand has here suppressed two descriptions very strongly marked with the taste of the age in which they were written: the one, of a full mass sung by birds, the nightingale officiating, with a sermon on love pronounced by the parrot, who afterwards gives absolution to all true lovers: the other of an allegorical repast which follows the mass, in which the first

dish is composed of tender glances, the second of smiles, the third of cares and complaints, &c. The liquor is jealousy, which turns all their heads: luckily the dinner ends by a dish of kisses, of which the guests being permitted to take as many as they think fit, depart tolerably well satisfied with their entertainment.

Page 76, Line 15. . . . . ' *amice gray.*'

See Milton's Paradise Regained, Book IV. line 426:

. . . . . ' morning fair

' Came forth with pilgrim steps in amice gray.'

NOTES

TO

THE ORDER OF KNIGHTHOOD.

THIS tale is abridged in the *Cento Novelle Antiche*; page 48, Nov. 51.

It is quoted by Fauchet, Duchesne, Chifflet, Du Cange, &c. and has been printed by Barbazan, and before him by M. Marin (Hist.e de Saladin) from one of the manuscript copies (of which there were three, differing from each other,) in the collection of M. de Sainte-Palaye. Du Cange (Gloss. et notes sur Villehardouin) quotes a prose version of it, which appears from the language to be of a later date. There also exists in the manuscripts of the royal library in Paris, another 'Order of Knighthood' in prose, and of a still later date, which is totally different, containing only instructions on the duties, the virtues, and dignity of knighthood.

Page 87, Line 5. . . . . '*Paynim land.*'

This is not an uncommon instance of the ignorance of the old fablers with respect to the religion, morals, and manners of foreign nations. All who were not Christians were indifferently styled *Pagans* and *Saracens.* In the Romance of Charlemagne the Saxons are called Saracens. The real Saracens are universally represented in Romance as Pagans, *adoring* Mahomet, Termagant, Apollo, and many other *gods:* and, which is still more absurd, these pretended Pagans are sometimes represented as having among them cardinals who say mass.

Page 87, Line 6. . . . . '*Saladin the Grand.*'

The name of this conqueror, who usurped the throne of the Soldans in Egypt, and atoned for his usurpation by his virtues, is familiar to every reader. Perhaps there cannot be a stronger attestation of his merit, and of the esteem in which he was universally held, than the praises which are here bestowed on him by a writer who naturally must have hated him, as the most formidable enemy of his country and religion.

Page 88, Line 15. . . . . '*Tabaria's land ador'd.*'

Hugh, castellain of St. Omer, was one of the French nobles who followed Godfrey of Bouillon to the first

crusade, and at the division of the kingdom of Jerusalem about the year 1102, received, as a recompense for his services, the lordship of Gallilee, and the principality of *Tiberias*, which was afterwards by corruption called *Tabaria*. He was made prisoner in 1179.

Page 89, Line 10. . . . . '*Bysants.*'

The Bysant or besant was a gold coin issued by the Greek emperors, and said to have been so called from *Byzantium*, the ancient name of Constantinople. D'Herbelot deduces its etymology from the Arabian *beizat zer* (golden egg), and says that the Saracens called by this name a Persian coin in the form of an egg, which they introduced into circulation in Asia. The word frequently occurs in the Fabliaux, and it appears from some of them, either that the bysant was current in France, and introduced there by the crusades, or that the name was indifferently applied to all sorts of gold coin. From a passage in Joinville it appears that the bysant was valued in his time at about ten sous, which were nearly equal to ten livres of the present day; so that the ransome mentioned in the tale amounted to a million of French livres, or between forty and fifty thousand pounds English. Bysants were generally current in England before the Norman conquest. St. Dunstan purchased of King Edgar the

estate of Hindon in Middlesex, for two hundred bysants. Dr. Henry values the bysant at nine shillings and four-pence, which agrees very nearly with Le Grand's calculation. Bysants or besants are among the English armorial bearings. (Guillim's Heraldry.)

Page 91, Line 5. . . . . '*For from thy hand I claim, &c.*'

It is a certain fact that many Saracen generals were knighted by the hands of the Christians. Facardin, the emir who was opposed to St. Louis in Egypt, received the order from the Emperor Frederick; and Saladin himself from Humphrey de Toron, whom he took prisoner at the battle of Tiberias; so that the story in which our fabler has interwoven the details of the ceremony is not wholly without foundation.

Page 91, Line 9. . . . . '*Holy Order.*'

The order of knighthood, like the priesthood, is indifferently called by the fablers the *holy order*, or *the order*. Indeed its object and its origin were in themselves highly respectable, besides which the enthusiastick religion of the age had conferred on it every mysterious rite that could render it more venerable: a sponsor, and the white garments appropriated to baptism; the imposition of hands, as in the confirmation; the ceremony of anointing, as in the extreme unction.

The future knight confessed his sins; and received the communion. His hair was shaven on the forehead in imitation of the tonsure, and cut round like that of ecclesiasticks. He enjoyed the same privileges as they, and like them incurred the penalties of simony, if he purchased or sold the admission to the order. In short, it was supposed to impress an indelible character of sanctity; and hence a knight convicted of a heinous crime was degraded with as much awful solemnity as a priest who had been guilty of sacrilege.

Page 92, Line 1. '*His beard was shaven.*'

The Saracens wore beards, which was not the case in France in the reign of St. Louis, about whose time this Fabliau was probably written. In the prose version of the *Order of Knighthood*, Hugh causes the Soldan's beard to be combed, without shaving it. Fashions were altered; and the French then wore beards.

Page 93, Line 4. '*The snow-white shirt.*'

Saladin does not receive his shirt till he has risen from his bed, because at this time it was customary to sleep naked. This is confirmed by the testimony of all the Fabliaux. From this practice have originated those ordinances of the early French kings, as well as many passages in their common law, by which a man and

married woman who shall have been surprised *naked* in the same room, are declared guilty of adultery. In the Romance of Gerard de Nevers, an old woman who assists in undressing a young damsel, expresses the utmost astonishment at seeing her get into bed in her shift. In that of La Charette, Launcelot, being lodged by a lady who had become enamoured of his person, finds himself under the necessity of sharing her bed, being informed that she has no other to offer him: being determined, however, to preserve his fidelity to his mistress, he goes to bed in his shirt; which is considered by him, and understood by the lady, as a sufficient declaration of his intentions. In the miniatures which adorn many manuscript copies of the Fabliaux and Romances, the persons who are represented as in bed, are always naked. The author of the Contes d'Eutrapel (printed in 1587), speaking of promises which are difficult to be performed, observes that they resemble those of a bride who should go to bed in her shift.

Page 93, Line 7. '*This scarlet robe.*'

Every part of the armour and dress, (which, in the original Fabliau, are enumerated in detail,) as the belt, the sword, the spurs, the brown hose, the white coif, &c. are represented as the symbols of some moral

excellence. These forced explanations are to be attributed to the general taste for allegory which had been disseminated by the theologians of the age.

Page 93, Line 13. '*Now all was sped.*'

Saladin being an infidel, the author does not mention the confession, the vigil of arms in the church, nor the communion.

Page 93, Line 14. '*The custom'd stroke.*'

It was at first customary to give the knight a slight blow, as if to announce to him that this was the last affront he was allowed to submit to: instead of this blow, which was called *la colée*, (from the Latin word *colaphus*) were afterwards introduced three strokes with a sword on the shoulder or neck (*le col*). The knight then received an embrace; from whence this part of the ceremony was called the *accolade*: on pressing occasions, as for instance when the order was conferred on the field of battle, the accolade only was employed.

Page 93, Line 18. . . . . '*The fourfold discipline, &c.*'

We shall not appreciate very highly the morality of an age which reduced the whole practice of virtue and religion to the four following points, viz. adherence to truth, succouring of dames, hearing mass, and fast-

ing. In like manner the *Miracles*, the metrical legends, and devotional tales, represent the perfection of Christianity as consisting of fasting, hearing mass, and corporal mortification; to which, though rarely, the practice of alms-giving is added.

Page 95, Line 3. . . . . '*Ten knights thy lore hath freed.*'

It was so necessary for the new knights to display their liberality on this great occasion, that it was customary among the nobles, when their eldest sons were received into the order, to levy a particular tax on their vassals for that purpose. This was one case of the three *loyal aids*. The other aids were levied for the purpose of paying the lord's ransome, or to defray the expence of marrying his eldest daughter.

Page 96, Line 4. '*Full fifty Emirs.*'

The word used in the original is *amiraux* (*admirals*) a corruption of *emir* or *amir*, a term which the Arabians applied to all who were entrusted with great offices, whether civil, or military. In France, the word has been used to signify a particular military command; and in the rest of Europe it is restricted to the marine.

The author concludes his Fabliau with high encomiums on knighthood, representing its members as the best defenders of religion and property, and the surest bulwarks against the Saracens, Albigenses, and other miscreants: for this reason, says he, they were permitted to enter the church completely armed, and *to put to death any person who should fail in respect to the holy sacrament.* In the life of St. Louis, by Joinville, that monarch relates to the historian a story of an old and crippled knight who terminated a religious dispute with a Jew by felling his antagonist with a stroke of his crutch; and adds, 'a layman who hears 'the Christian religion evil spoken of, should defend 'it with his sword alone, which he should thrust into 'the belly of his adversary as far as it will go.'

NOTES

TO

THE GENTLE BACHELOR.

THE translator has here employed the 7-or-8-syllable couplet, which is the measure of the original extract, conforming also to the single line and triplet with which it begins. The harshness of imagery he has also endeavoured to retain, with exception of one passage (line 39 to 42) which may be literally rendered as follows:—

'Nor doth he demand other sugar-plums
'Than the points of swords broken;
'And the iron of lances with mustard,
'It is a food which much pleaseth him;
'And the broken meshes of hauberks with pepper.'

In the original—

'Ne ne demande autre dragies
'Que pointes d'espees brisies;

'Et fers de glaive à la moustarde,

'C'est un mes qui forment li tarde;

'Et haubers desmaillies au poivre.'

The two next lines are very animated:—

'Et veut la grant poudriere boivre

'Avec l'aleine des chevaus.'

Page 101, Line 1. '*What gentle bachelor is he, &c.*' The nobility of Europe was usually divided into three orders: bannerets, knights, and squires. The banneret, whether duke, earl, marquis, or baron, was a great landholder, who was able to conduct under his *banner* a certain number of gentlemen who were his immediate tenants. This banner was square. The standard or *pennon* of the knights was pointed. The poorer knights were generally called (les bas chevaliers) bachelors. There were, however, some bachelors who were so by the tenure of their lands, and who, when knighted, were called knights-bachelors. As to the squires, it has been already observed in the preface that they were candidates for knighthood.

Page 101, Line 3. '*Rock'd and cradled in a shield.*' Some shields were extremely curved in their breadth; so that, if laid on the ground with the inside uppermost, they might very well have answered the purpose of a cradle.

Page 102, Line 3. '*Ponderous as a mace his fist, &c.*' The *mace* (*masse* or *massue*) was used both in battles and tournaments. It was a common weapon with ecclesiasticks, who, in consequence of their tenures, frequently took the field, but were by a canon of the church forbidden to wield the sword. The mace was generally made of iron, but (the handle at least) was sometimes of wood. In figure it much resembled a chocolate mill. A leathern thong or a chain was passed through a hole in the handle, by which the mace might be suspended from the saddle-bow, and secured from falling out of the hand.

NOTES

TO

THE MANTLE MADE AMISS.

M. Le Grand informs us, that in the ancient French manuscripts this tale is called *Court Mantel; (the short mantle;)* but that the copy he had chosen for abridgement was a prose one of the sixteenth century, printed by Didier, under the title of *Le Manteau mal taillé.* Some magical test of female fidelity seems to have been fashionable among the romance writers. In this tale we have a mantle: in the romance of Tristan, and in that of Perceval, it is a drinking-horn or cup; a fiction which has been borrowed both by Ariosto and Fontaine; as the mantle probably suggested to Spenser his Florimel's girdle. 'The Boy and Mantle' in Percy's Reliques of English Poetry has rendered the story familiar to every reader.

Page 107, Line 2. '*Scans with delight the deeds of*
'*Arthur's day.*'

Arthur, as Geoffrey of Monmouth informs us, was the

son of Uther Pendragon, King of Britain, by Igerna (or Iögerne) wife of Gorlois, Duke of Cornwall. The intercourse of Uther with this lady was effected by the assistance of the enchanter Merlin, who transformed the monarch into the likeness of Gorlois her husband. Gorlois (during this transaction) being slain in battle, Uther marries Igerna; and in due time Arthur is born. The classical reader needs hardly be reminded of Milton's Epitaphium Damonis, line 166—

'Tum gravidam Arturo, fatali fraude, Iögernen,
'Mendaces vultus, assumptaque Gorlois arma,
'Merlini dolus.'——

(In the second series of notes to this tale, article Ewaine, is a quotation from Gruffydd Llwyd, alluding to Uther.)

Arthur, one of the *neuf preux* or *nine worthies*, is represented in romance as King of Great Britain, conqueror of Ireland, Gothland, Dacia or Denmark, Norway, and Gaul. He carried to the highest pitch of glory the order of knights of the *round-table*, instituted by his father, and so called from a mysterious table, the gift of the enchanter Merlin. Arthur possessed a magical sword named *Escalibor* or *Caliburn*; a word, according to the English Mort d'Arthur, (edit. 1634, Part I. chap. 28) signifying *cut-steel*: (possibly

its etymon may be the Latin *chalybs:* it has not been met with, by the translator, as a Welch word). His standard was a steel dragon which vomited flames. Notwithstanding these and other advantages, he was at length (A. D. 542) sorely wounded in a battle against his rebellious nephew Modred; and, being borne away in a barge by ladies to the vale of Avalon, either died, or was removed for a season from this world.

The reader who seeks for a spirited epitome of Arthur's exploits, principally as recorded by Geoffrey of Monmouth, will find it in the 4th song of Drayton's Poly-Olbion. He will there be told, by a choir of Welch nymphs, of—

'The richness of the armes their well-made worthie
'wore,
'The temper of his sword, the try'd *Escalaboure*,
'The bignes and the length of *Rone* his noble
'speare,
'With *Pridwin* his great shield, and what the proofe
'could beare;
'His baudrick how adorn'd with stones of wondrous
'price,
'The sacred virgin's shape he bore for his device:'

And anon—

'. . . . How he himself at Badon bore that day
'When at the glorious gole his British scepter lay:
'Two daies together how the battell stronglie stood:
'Pendragon's worthie sonne who waded there in
'blood,
'Three hundred Saxons slew with his owne valiant
hand.'
'And, after these, in France th' adventures him
'befell,
'At Paris, in the lists, where he with Flollio fought:
'For best advantage how they traversed their
'grounds,
'The horrid blowes they lent, the world-amazing
'wounds.'

Afterwards—

'. . . . How great Rython's selfe hee slew in his
'repaire,
'(Who ravisht Howell's neece, young Hellena the
'faire,)
'And for a trophy brought the giant's coat away,
'Made of the beards of kings.' . . . . . .
'Then, by false Mordred's hand, how last hee
'chanc't to fall.
'The howre of his decease, his place of buriall.'

And, in Selden's illustrations of song 3d, will be found

the following account of the discovery of 'Great Arthur's tombe'—'Henry II. (A. D. 1154 to 1189) in 'his expedition towards Ireland, entertayned by the 'way in Wales with Bardish songs, wherein he heard 'it affirmed, that in Glastenbury (made almost an ile' 'by the river's embracements,) Arthur was buried 'twixt two pillars, gave commandement to Henry of 'Blois, then abbot, to make search for the corps: 'which was found in a wooden coffin some 16 foote 'deepe: but, after they had digged 9 foot, they 'found a stone, on whose lower side was fixt a 'leaden crosse with his name inscribed, and the 'letter side of it turn'd to the stone. He was then 'honored with a sumptuous monument; and, after-'ward, the sculs of him and his wife Guinever were 'taken out (to remain as separat reliques and specta-'cles,) by Edward Longshanks and Elianor. The 'Bards' songs suppose that, after the battell of Cam-'lan in Cornwall, where trayterous Mordred was 'slaine, and Arthur wounded, Morgain le fay con-'veyed the body hither to cure it: which done, Ar-'thur is to return (yet expected) to the rule of his 'country. Read these, attributed to the best of Bards, '(Taliessin.—ap. Pris. defens. Hist. Brit.) expressing 'as much:

'. . . . . Morgain suscepit honore
'Inque suis thalamis posuit super aurea regem
'Fulcra, manuque sibi detexit vulnus honestâ
'Inspexitque diu: tandemque redire salutem
'Posse sibi dixit, si secum tempore longo
'Esset, et ipsius vellet medicamine fungi.'

'Englisht in meeter thus by the author: (M. Dray-
'ton:)—

'. . . . . Morgain with honor took,
'And in a chaire of state doth cause him to repose;
'Then with a modest hand his wounds she doth
'unclose,
'And, having searcht them well, she bad him not
'to doubt
'He should in time be cur'd, if he would stay it
'out,
'And would the med'cine take that she to him
'would give.'

See also Lydgate's Fall of Princes, Book VIII. chap. 24. Refer to note on 'Lay of Sir Lanval,' Vol. II. Page 72, Line 10.

Roger Hoveden, and Walter of Coventry, report that Richard I. presented Tancred King of Sicily with Arthur's sword Caliburn, said to have been found in his coffin.

Page 108, Line 4. '*When royal Arthur will'd high*
'*court to hold.*'

In the early feudal times, the kings and sovereign princes kept no regular court, but, like their barons, lived privately in their castles or cities, with their families and the great officers of their household, and subsisted on the revenues of their domains. It was only on the three or four great annual festivals of the church that they ordinarily convoked their barons, and displayed their magnificence. These assemblies were called *Cours Plenieres*, and in the present translations are indiscriminately rendered *plenar*, *plenary*, *high*, *full*, or *open*, *courts*. They were announced in the different cities by heralds and publick messengers, and were resorted to not only by the nobility of the country, but by strangers. At these seasons of general festivity were united all the pleasures and pastimes of those ages: banqueting, dancing, minstrels, buffoons and jugglers, (*jongleurs*,) dancing-bears, &c. At the same time presents of clothes and money, under the name of *largess*, were distributed to the populace with inconceivable profusion.

The *plenary courts* seem to have been an imitation of the famous *diets* established by Charlemagne, and were continued in France by Hugh Capet and his

successors till the reign of Charles VII. who very wisely abolished them.

Page 108, Line 15. *'But Mourgue the fay be-*
'thought her to prevent.'

Mourgue, Morgane, or Morgain, was sister to King Arthur; and was instructed in the art of magick by Merlin. Being one day in bed with her lover Sir Guiomars, she was surprised by Guenever, Arthur's queen, who had the indiscretion to make the story publick. Mourgue retired from court, to concert projects of vengeance, and this fatal mantle was one of the many artifices she devised for that purpose. Mr. Warton supposes her name to be derived from *Mergian Peri*, one of the most eminent Asiatick fairies.

Of beings distinguished by the name of fairies, two species may be observed in romance. The one resembles the nymphs, naiads, and dryads, of classical mythology: supernatural beings, having a proper and inherent power: of these the tales of Lanval and Gruélan furnish examples. The other sort are merely witches; such are Mourgue, Viviana, and the fairy of Burgundy; all scholars of Merlin. These conducted their operations by the intervention of demons. In *the Journal of Paris in the reigns of Charles VI. and*

Charles VII. it is asserted that the maid of Orleans, in answer to an interrogatory of the doctors, whether she had '*ever assisted at the assemblies held at the* '*fountain of the fairies near Domprein, round which* '*the evil spirits dance?*' confessed, that she had, at the age of twenty-seven, often repaired to '*a beautiful* '*fountain in the country of Lorraine, which she named* '*the good fountain of the fairies of our Lord.*'

Merlin, according to Geoffrey of Monmouth and the romances, was the issue of a demon and a virgin. He was born in Britain, and was very serviceable to Arthur by his proficiency in magick, which, however, was at last the cause of his own destruction. Having communicated to his mistress, the young and beautiful Viviana, two spells; the one to lay her patents asleep, and the other to confine them whenever she might think proper; she employed the first to protect her chastity from his attempts, and made a more cruel use of the second, confining him in a forest, (other MSS. say in a tomb,) in which he died. His spirit, however, still hovered about the place, and his voice was often heard by passengers. This catastrophe is alluded to by Spenser. (Faerie Queene, Book III. canto 3.) The story of the tomb is adopted by Ariosto, who places it in the neighbourhood of Poitiers.

Among the most extraordinary feats of Merlin, may be mentioned his transporting from the mountain of Kildare in Ireland to the plain of Ambresbury in Wiltshire, in memory of the Britons treacherously slain by Hengist, those huge blocks of stone called Stone-henge. These blocks (entitled the Giants' dance,) had been previously carried to Kildare by giants from the farthest coasts of Africa, and every stone possessed some healing virtue. See Geoffrey of Monmouth, Thompson's translation, edit. 1718, page 246.

Page 108, Line 16. '*To work fair Guenever the 'queen's annoy.*'

Guenever (in the British bards, Gwenhwyfar; in Geoffrey's Latin, Guanhumara;) was the wife of Arthur, and the mistress of Sir Launcelot du Lake, one of the most distinguished knights of the round-table. If Arthur regarded female fidelity as a principal ingredient of conjugal happiness, he certainly was unwise in marrying Guenever, since, as appears by Mort d'Arthur, (Part I. chap. 45. edit. 1634.) 'Merlin warned the king privily that Guenever was 'not wholesome for him to take to wife, for he warned 'him that Launcelot should love her, and she him 'againe.'

Page 109, Line 9. '*Join'd with Sir Gawaine Arthur*
'*did recline.*'

Sir Gawaine (in the British Bards, Gwalchmai; and in the Latin of Geoffrey of Monmouth, Walganus;) was nephew to King Arthur, by his sister Morgause, married to Lot, who (according to Geoffrey) was by Arthur made king of Norway. Sir Gawaine was one of the most famous knights of the round-table, and is characterized among the French romancers as the *sage* and *courteous* Gawaine. To this Chaucer alludes in his 'Squieres Tale,' where the strange knight 'salueth' all the court

'With so high reverence and observance,
'As well in speeche as in his contenance,
'That Gawain with his olde curtesie,
'Though he were come agen out of faerie,
'Ne coude him not amenden with a word.'

In the English Mort d'Arthur, (edit. 1634, Part I. chap. 6, and 36,) Sir Gawaine's father Lot is styled 'King of Lowthean and of Orkeney:' his mother is called Morgause, and is represented as having four sons: namely, Gawaine, Agravaine, Gaheris, and Gareth.

Page 112, Line 15. *'Let her with all her comely 'train attend, &c.'*

The etiquette of Arthur's court did not, it seems, admit of the mixed society of men and women during meal-times, in one common apartment. 'At last' (says Geoffrey of Monmouth, edit. 1718, page 303.) 'when divine service was over at both churches, the 'king and queen put off their crowns, and putting on 'their lighter ornaments, go to the banquet; he to 'one palace with the men, and she to another with 'the women. For the Britons still observing the an-'cient custom of Troy, the men and women used to 'celebrate their festivals apart.'

Page 114, Line 11. *'Thereat Sir Ewaine, good 'King Urien's son.'*

Sir Ewaine or Ywain (in Geoffrey, Eventus; in French, Yvain;) was son of King Urien or Urience, by his wife Mourgue or Morgain the fairy, who was Arthur's sister. (See Mort d'Arthur, 1634, Part I. chap. 36.) Mr. Tyrwhitt (in his notes on Chaucer's Canterbury Tales, edit. 1775, page 320,) quotes an English metrical romance of Ywain and Gawain. MS. Cott. Galb. E. IX. See a subsequent note to this tale for a further account of Sir Ewaine.

Page 115, Line 12. '*For flouting jests Sir Kay*
'*was most renown'd.*'

Sir Kay (in the French, Messire Queux; and in Geoffrey of Monmouth, Caius;) was foster-brother of Arthur; and also seneschal, or superintendant of his feasts. Sir Kay is represented by the romance writers as caustick and fond of scandal, always boasting of his prowess, often fighting, and as often beaten. He is seldom mentioned but as an object of ridicule. For some further notice of him, see a subsequent note to this tale.

Page 120, Line 3. ''*Twas Karados Brise-bras, ap-*
'*prov'd of all, &c.*'

'To be ignorant, is painful;' says Dr. Johnson; 'but 'it is dangerous to quiet our uneasiness by the delu-'sive opiate of hasty persuasion.' The writers of romance, however, were as regardless of danger, when in pursuit of glory, as are the heroes they celebrate. They spurred furiously forward, in contempt of costume, chronology, and geography: nor do they appear to have been much more embarrassed by etymological impediments. If they met with a proper name among the bards of Britain or Armorica which seemed to accord in sound and meaning with any words in their own language, they presently (like the ancient

Greeks in Bryant's Mythology,) equipped it with a derivation from that quarter. This has probably been the case with Sir Kay: (in British, Cai:) his *office* in the court of Arthur being, according to Geoffrey of Monmouth, that of *seneschal*, or *sewer*, (*superintendant of feasts*,) occasioned his *name* to be detorted into *Queux*, a word anciently signifying *cuisinier*, (*cook*,) in the French language. (See Montfaucon's Monarchie Françoise, Vol. II. page 19. Also Dictionnaire du vieux Langage, par Lacombe—'Isembert 'étoit *grant queulx* de France sous Louis IX. in 1250, "nom affecté alors à l'officier du palais *qui avoit in-* 'spection sur les cuisines du roi, et sur tout ce qui regar- 'doit la service de sa table.') The experiment seems pretty clearly, however, to have been tried upon Sir Karados Brise-bras, and is happily attended with a tolerable coincidence of signification. In '*Trioedd* '*ynys Prydain*,' or *the Triades of the Island of Britain*, one of the most valuable fragments now extant of the ancient British tongue, and composed, as appears, between the third and seventh centuries, (Jones's Relicks, p. 9. edit. 1794.) we find *Caradoc Freich-fras*, or *strong-armed Caradoc*; from *braich*, *an arm*, and *brâs*, *thick*, or *strong*. (In the Armoric dialect *brêch* is *an arm*, and *brâs* is *great*.) The ap-

pellation of *Brise-bras* or *break-arm*, employed by the French fabler, may hence fairly date its origin. For a further account of Sir Karados, the reader is referred to a subsequent note to this tale.

Page 123, Line 7. . . . . ' *So stay thee, story*
' *mine!*
' *Come, bear around a brimmed bowl of wine!*'—

This concluding passage is added from the metrical original—

' Li Romans faut: veez-ci la fin,
' Or vous dovez boire du vin.'

(See Le Grand, Vol. III. page 106, notes to ' Pauvre ' Mercier.') The prose fabliau, with some homour, breaks off abruptly on the point of publishing the successful candidate.

It has been already intimated in the preface, that the French Trouveurs borrowed many of their subjects from the Bards of Britain and Armorica. (*Ar-y-môr-ucha*, the country *on the upper sea*; by the natives of Wales more frequently called *Llydaw*: ' which ' woorde (*Llydaw*) seemeth to me (says H. Llwyd) ' to be deriyed from the Latine woorde *Littus*, signify-

'ing *the shoare.*') As the present tale affords a convenient opportunity, the reader may not be displeased at seeing a few notices which have occurred to the translator, thrown together in support of this opinion.

Arthur—(to begin then with one of the most celebrated heroes of the French romancers,) and his royal consort *Guenever*, are both mentioned in the following passage of the *Afallennau* or *orchard*, a poem composed by *Myrddyn Wyllt*, or *Merlin the Wild*, who flourished in the sixth century, was a pupil of the celebrated Taliessin, and fought under the banner of Arthur at the fatal battle of Camlan, A. D. 542.—

'A mi ddysgoganaf dyddaw etwa
'Meddrawd ac *Arthur* modur tyrfa
'Camlan darmerthan difieu yna
'Namyn saith ni ddyraith o'r cymmanfa.
'Edryched *Wenhwyfar* wedi ei thraha
'Ban atfedd Cadwaladr . . . .
'Eglwysig bendefig a'i tywysa.
'Gwaeth i mi a dderfydd heb ysgorfa!
'Lleas mab Gwenddydd, fy llaw a'i gwna!'

That is—'Yet shall my song of prophecy announce 'the coming again of Meddrawd, (Modred,) and of 'Arthur, monarch of the host; again shall they rush 'to the battle of Camlan: two days will the conflict

'last, and only seven escape from the contest. Then 'let *Wenhwyfar* (or *Gwenhwyfar*, that is, *Guenever*,) 'remember the crimes she has been guilty of, when 'Cadwalader repossesses . . . . . when 'an ecclesiastical hero leads the warriours to battle.— 'Alas!—for more lamentable is my destiny! and hope 'affords no refuge! The son of Gwenddydd is dead! 'slain by my accursed hand!'—(See Jones's Musical 'Relicks, folio, London, 1784 and 1794.)

The Welch writers (with whom, as with the Druids, the number *three* seems to have been held in peculiar estimation,) assign to Arthur *three* consorts of the name of *Gwenhwyfar*. (In the preceding quotation from Myrddyn Wyllt the G is dropt euphoniæ gratiâ; to avoid the harshness of colliding consonants; a practice justified by Welch prosody.) The lady in question was daughter to Gogrfan *Gawr*: that is, according to modern Welch, *the giant* Gogyrfan. With more propriety, probably, it would be rendered *Prince* Gogyrfan; for *Cawr*, in ancient British, signifies not only *a man of great size*, but also *a king* or *chieftain*. Of this perhaps Geoffrey of Monmouth might not be aware, since he is so liberal of his giants. (See Evans's Specimens of Bardick Poetry, page 34, note: edit. 1764.) Geoffrey speaks but of *one Guanhumara*, and

her he represents as descended from a noble family of Romans, educated under Duke Cador, and surpassing in beauty all the women of the island. (Book IX. chap. 9.) Arthur's *round-table* is noticed by Melchin, a British writer temp. Vortipor. Melchin is quoted by Harding, who calls him Mevinus; by Bale, who calls him M. Avallonius; and by Leland, who styles him one of the lights of Britain's antiquaries. The historian Nennius, who lived about 400 years before Geoffrey of Monmouth, particularizes 12 battles of Arthur in his 62d and 63d chapters. (See Gale's XV. Scriptores, p. 114.) The last battle he fought upon Badon-hill is noticed by Taliessin, chief Bard temp. Maelgwyn-Gwynedd, about A. D. 570.—

'Gwae yntwy yr ynfidion pan fy warth Fadon
'Arthur ben haelion y lafneu by gochion
'Gwnaeth ar y alon gwaith gwyr gofynion
'Gofynion gwaed dared mach deyrn y gogledd
'Heb drais heb drossedd.'

That is—'O miserable those' (Saxons) 'at Badon-'hill, whose blood was there shed by Arthur, chief of 'nobles; in revenge for nobles by them slain in the 'north, whose valour long supported the kings thereof, 'without violence, without transgression.'

Lewis, in his ancient history of Britain, p. 175, says

that King Uther, after the death of Gorlois, and birth of Arthur, married the widow *Eigr*, (the *Igerna* of Geoffrey of Monmouth,) by whom he had a daughter named *Anne*, whom he married to *Lot*, Earl of Liel; of which marriage Meddrawd and Gwalchmai were the issue. Geoffrey of Monmouth (Book VIII. chap. 20) also tells us that by Igerna Uther had a daughter named *Anne*. This *Anne* must therefore be the *Morgause* of Mort d'Arthur. (Edit. 1634.)

The mountain *Gader* in Brecknockshire is styled *Cadair Arthur*. (*Arthur's Chair.*) A river called *Gargwy*, or *Garwy*, descends from it, which possibly may have taken its name from *Garwy hîr*, (*Garwy the tall,*) who is noticed by the Bards as one of the warriours of Arthur. Mr. Pennant thinks Garwy is the Sir Gareth of romance.

Sir Gawaine.—In the British bards a *Gwalchmai* (of which name there were two cotemporary worthies,) is recorded as 'one of the three *golden-tongued* heroes of Britain:' hence probably originated Sir Gawaine's character of *sage* and *courteous* in the pages of romance; though the *golden-tongued* Gwalchmai seems not to have been the nephew of Arthur, being called Gwalchmai *mab Gwyar*,' ('Gwalchmai *son of Gwyar*'). The bard *Cynddelw Brydydd mawr*, about the year

1160, alludes to the prowess of a Gwalchmai in the following lines—

'Gwersyll torfoedd tew llew lladdai,
'Gorsaf tarf, taerfalch fal *Gwalchmai.*'

That is—

'Like a lion, he mowed down thick troops in battle;
'Like *Gwalchmai* he was fierce in chasing his enemies.'

Evans's Dissertatio de Bardis, edit. 1764, page 84.

A Gwalchmai was enamoured of the beautiful *Olwen*, daughter of Ysbyddaden Ben Cawr, a prince of North Britain. Such were her charms, that we are told, 'Pedair meillion a derddynt.'—'Four trefoils sprang up wherever she placed her foot.' (See notes to Dafydd ap Gwillym:) A Gwalchmai was nephew to King Arthur, and *half*-brother to the traitor Meddrawd or Modred: But see the foregoing note. Geoffrey also makes him *whole*-brother. (Book IX. chap. 9.) A Gwalchmai was slain in the civil wars between Arthur and Meddrawd. With respect to King *Lot*, the father of Arthur's nephew Gawaine or Gwalchmai, his name, says Lewis Morris, a judicious Welch antiquary, was *Llew*; (*ap Cynfarch*;) and should therefore have been rendered in Latin by the word *Leo*, not *Lotho*, (*Lot*,) as Geoffrey of Monmouth has erroneously translated it.

Sir Ewaine.—Ewein, or *Owain, ap Urien*, is celebrated by the Bards Taliessin and Llywarch-Hên, (both of whom flourished in the sixth century,) as well as in the historical Triades. In one of these he is styled 'one of the three blessed rulers of the Isle 'of Britain.' *Eluned*, his mistress, possessed a ring, esteemed 'one of the thirteen rarities of Britain;' which (like the wondrous ring of Gyges) would render the wearer invisible. The Bards sing, that the lover of Eluned being in doleful confinement between the portcullis and gate of a castle, was, through the assistance of this ring, released by his mistress. (See Owen's notes to Dafydd ap Gwillym, page 535.)

Urien ap Cynfarch, the father of *Ewein* or *Owain*, was by Arthur made king of Reged, a territory in Caledonia. His situation here was far from peaceful, owing to the frequent irruptions of the Saxons. Taliessin, in poems which are still extant, enumerates twelve pitched battles which he fought. That of *Argoed Llwyfein* is particularly described. It was fought with *Flamddwyn;* (so the Britons called *Ida*, the first Saxon king of Northumberland;) and *Ewein* or *Owain* there commanded his father's forces, as the following passage indicates:—

'Atorelwis Flamddwyn fawr drybestawd,
'A ddodynt gyngwystlon, a ynt parawd?
'Yr attebwys *Owain* ddwyrain ffossawd,
'Ni ddodynt iddynt, nid ynt parawd!
'A Chenau mab Coel by ddai gymmwyawg llew
'Cyn talai o wystl nebawd!'—

That is—

'Flamddwyn, violently agitated, demanded,
"If pledges are to be given, are they ready?'
'*Owain*, of the mighty stroke, replied,
"They shall not be given! they are not ready!'
'And Cenau, the son of Coel, (exclaimed,) 'the
"lion shall be vanquished
"Before any one shall give a pledge!"—

This battle of *Argoed Llwyfein*, and the prowess of *Ewein* or *Owain*, long survived in the memory of the Bards: 'Escynnu ar llu ar lle *Ewein*,'—says Einiawn, in the 13th century—

'Ysgymmod gorfod, gorfalch am brein,
'Ysgymmyn gwerlyn, gwerlid gofiein,
'Ysgymydd clodrydd, Kulwydd a *Llwyfein*.'—

That is—'When thou invadedst thine enemies, 'where *Ewein* thy predecessor invaded them in former 'times; full proud was thy heart in dividing the spoils;

'it happened as in the battles of Kulwydd and *Llwy-*
'*fein.*' (See Evans's Specimens of Bardick Poetry, pages 21 and 122, edit. 1764.)

In a poem of Gruffydd Llwyd, A. D. 1400, addressed to Owain Glyndwr, ('the great magician, damn'd Glendower,' of Shakspeare;) we find the following allusion to *Ewein*, or *Owain, ap Urien*:—

'Cefaist rammant yn d'antur,
'Uthr Bendragon, ddwyfron ddur:
'Pan ddialawdd, (gawdd goddef,)
'Ei frawd, a'i rwysg, a'i frwydr ef.
'Hwyliaist, siwrneaist, helynt,
'*Owain ab Urien* gain gynt,
'Pan oedd fuan ymwanwr
'Y marchog duog o'r dwr.'

That is—'Thou hast found an omen in thine enter-
'prizes, like Uther Pendragon, steel-breasted, (or,
'clad in mail,) when he revenged (what could not
'have been borne without indignation,) his brother's
'grandeur and battles. Thou hast travelled by land
'and by sea in the conduct of thine affairs, like
'*Owain ap Urien* in days of yore, when with activity
'he encountered the black knight of the water.' (See Jones's Musical Relicks, 1784, and 1794. Also Ellis's Memoirs of Owain Glyndwr.)

Sir Kay.—In the *Triades* the name of *Cai* occurs with considerable distinction. He is associated with Trystan, and with Huail, and is styled one of 'The 'three crowned chiefs of battle of the isle of Britain.' From the same passage we learn, that there was one who was supreme over these three, namely, '*Bedwyr* mab Pedrawg.' (*Bedwyr* the son of Pedrawg.) This is unquestionably the Duke of Normandy, and butler of Arthur, *Bedver*; whom Geoffrey of Monmouth represents as appearing officially at the festival of Arthur's coronation, followed with a thousand attendants, in variety of habits, who waited with all kinds of cups and drinking-vessels.

Sir Karados Brise-bras—In Welch, as has been already observed, *Caradoc Freich-fras* or *strong-armed Caradoc.* He was, according to their writers, son to Gwenllian, (daughter of Brychan, Prince of Brecknock,) by Ller Molwynen, Lord of Gloucester. Caradoc made himself, by conquest, Lord of Ferlex, the ancient name of all the territory between the rivers Severn and Wye; he also wrested the lordship of Brecknock from his kinsman Dyfnwall. Having been employed in a military capacity against the Scots and Picts, by King Arthur, he was, in consequence of his success, honoured with the knighthood of the round-

table, and made Lord of 'Castell y dolorus,' (the dolorous tower,) a fortress for the confinement of state prisoners. (The name of 'Karados de la dou-'loureuse tour' occurs in the printed Roman de Lancelot, Vol. I. f. 175, edit. Paris, 1520.) Caradoc is particularly noticed in the *Triades of the Isle of Britain*; where, in the true spirit of bardick eulogy, he is styled—'One of the three darlings of King Arthur's 'court'—'One of the three battle-knights of Britain.' His fleet stallion Lluagor is also recorded there as 'one of the three gift horses of Britain.' Arthur is said to have himself composed an Englyn or stanza, wherein he emphatically names Caradoc, 'The Pillar 'of Wales.' To crown all, he married *Tegan Eurfron*, daughter of Pelmor, King of Gwinedd or North Wales; a princess recorded in the *Triades*, as 'one 'of the three chaste women of Britain: who possessed 'three rarities, of which herself only was reputed 'worthy; her mantle, her golden goblet, and her 'knife.'

Aneurin Gwawdrydd, styled the 'Monarch of the 'Bards,' who flourished about the year 570, and was consequently cotemporary with *Caradoc Freich-fras*, thus celebrates his prowess in his excellent poem entitled *Gododin*:—

'Pan gryssiei *Garadawg* i gad
'Mab baedd coed, trychwn, trychiad,
'Tarw byddin yn nhrin gymmyniad,
'Ef llithiai wydd gwn oi angad,
'Ys fy nhyst Ewein fab Eulad,
'A Gwrien a Gwyn, a Gwriad.'

That is—

'When *Garadawg* (*Caradoc*) rushed to the war,
'Son of the wild-boar, hewing down his maimed
'enemies,
'Like the bull in conflict of fight
'He wrested the spear from the hand of his ad-
'versary:
'As Ewein the son of Eulad can testify,
'And Gwrien, and Gwyn, and Gwriad.'

See Evans's Dissertatio de Bardis, pages 68, 73, edit. 1764.

Merlin.—Of Merlin it may not be necessary to say more than that two persons of this name are celebrated by Welch writers. The one is *Myrddyn Emrys*, styled 'one of the three chief magicians of Britain;' who is the Ambrose Merlin of Geoffrey of Monmouth. The other is *Myrddyn ap Morfryn*, or *Myrddyn Wyllt*; in Latin Merlin Sylvester. They are recorded, together with Taliessin the poetical preceptor

of Myrddyn (or Merdyn) ap Morfryn, in the following Triad :—

'Tri phif fardd ynys Brydain.

'Merddyn Emrys;

'Merdyn mab Morfryn;

'A Thaliesin pen Beirdd.'

That is—

'The three principal Bards of the island of Britain.

'Merlin Ambrose;

'Merlin the son of Morfryn;

'And Taliessin, the chief of Bards.'

NOTES

TO

THE MULE WITHOUT A BRIDLE.

Page 127, Line 3. '*And where proud Carduel's*
'*battlements arise.*'

Several cities besides Carduel are allotted to Arthur by the romance writers. The principal are Camelot, (which contained the round-table;) Carleon, (Caer-Lleon,) and Cardigan. Carduel is sometimes spelt Kerdenyle, or Kerdevyle; (See Warton, Vol. II. page 102;) and Cardoyle. (See Mort d'Arthur, part I. chap. 61; edit. 1634.)

Camelot is said, by Leland, Camden, and Stow; and by Selden, in his notes to Drayton's Poly-Olbion; (songs 3d and 4th;) to have been at South Cadbury in Somersetshire. In the prologue to Mort d'Arthur, it is a town in Wales; but in the work itself (Part I. chap. 44) it is called Winchester. Geoffrey of Mon-

mouth (Thompson's translation, page 49.) calls Winchester Kaerguen.

Caer-Lleon was a name used indifferently for Carleon in Monmouthshire, and for Chester, sometimes called West-Chester. The one was called Caer-Lleon-ar-Wysg, from its situation on the river Usk: the other, Caer-Lleon-ar-Dyfrdwy, from its situation on the river Dee. Geoffrey of Monmouth's Caerlisle is Caer-Lleon. (See note in Warton's History of English Poetry; edit. 1775, Dissertation I. page 8.) His city of Legions (see Book IX. chap. 12.) is Caer-Lleon-ar-Wysg.

According to the British Triades, the principal courts or palaces of Arthur were as follows:—

'Tair prif lys Arthur.

'Caer-Lleon ar Wysg y Nghymru:

'Celliwig, yn Nyfnaint, neu y Nghernyw:

'A Phenrhyn Rhionedd, yn y gogledd.'

That is—

'The three chief palaces of Arthur.

'Carleon on the river Usk in Wales:

'Celliwig, in Devon, or Cornwall:

'And Penrhyn Rhionedd, in the north.'

The feast of Arthur at Carleon upon Usk, is honourably mentioned in the following Triad:—

'Tair gwlêdd anrhydeddus ynys Prydain.

'Gwlêdd Caswallon yn ôl gyrru Iwlcassar o'r ynys
'hon:

'Gwlêdd Emrys Wledig ar ôl gorchfygu y Saeson:

'A gwlêdd Arthur frenin ynghaer-Lleon-ar-Wysg.'

That is—.

'The three honourable feasts of the isle of Britain.

'The feast of Caswallon, (Cassivellaunus,) after
'repelling Julius Cæsar from this isle:

'The feast of Aurelius Ambrosius, after he had
'conquered the Saxons:

'And the feast of King Arthur at Carleon upon
'Usk.'

Pseudo Gildas describes Carleon upon Usk as—

'Nobilis urbs, et amœna situ, quam labilis Osca
'Irrigat, ...

Page 137, Line 4. '*Bore high in air a mangled*
'*warriour's head.*'

This terrifick architectural ornament occurs also in the Romance of Sir Libius Disconius, or Li beau desconus. (The fair unknown.) See Percy's Essay on the ancient Metrical Romances. (Reliques, Vol. III. edit. 1775.) A magnificent, and perhaps the only extant, specimen of capitals of this order, still encircles and adorns one of the publick buildings of the uni-

versity of Oxford. The heads have been assigned by antiquaries to the paynim Cæsars, who, if their bodies were less disproportionate than that of Yllapantac in the Peruvian Tales, must consequently have been all giants of the first enormity.

Page 143, Line 6. '*Each adverse wheels to take his* '*full career*, &c.'

This duel of the two knights is what was formerly called a *joust* or *tilt*, in which the combatants charged each other with lances, on horseback, and at full speed. A dexterous management of the shield, and especially a firm seat on the saddle, were necessary, to prevent being unhorsed by the shock of the adversary. If the horse was overthrown, his rider was not considered as vanquished, unless he had quitted his saddle-bows. These *saddle-bows* (*arçons*) rose to a considerable height before and behind, and were faced with metal. A representation is given in the head-piece to 'The 'Gentle Bachelor.'

To ascertain by accurate inspection that the knights were not fastened to their saddles, was part of the duty of the heralds at tournaments.

Page 145, Line 12. '*She seats the courteous* '*Gawaine by her side.*'

It will appear from many passages in the Fabliaux,

that the custom of reclining on beds or couches during meals, after the manner of the ancients, still subsisted. Chairs were probably not in general use. In Peres Ploughmane's Crede, the author, describing the luxury of the monks, mentions

'An halle for an hygh kynge an houshold to
'holden,
'With brode bordes abouten, *ybenched* wel clene.'

In the Geste of King Horne we find

'Horne sett hi *abenche*.'

In the chamber of a bishop of Winchester in 1266, forms or benches only are mentioned 'Et de i mensa 'cum tressellis in camera dom. Episcopi. et v *formis* 'in eadem camera.' (Warton, Hist. Poetry, Vol. I. page 40.)

From this usage our court of King's *Bench* has its name.

Page 145, Line 14. '*Feeds from her food, he part-*
'*ner of her dish.*'

To eat on the same trencher or plate with any one was considered as the strongest mark of friendship. At great entertainments, the guests were placed two and two, and only one plate was allotted to each pair. In the romance of Perce-forest it is said, '*There were* '*eight hundred knights all seated at table, and yet there*

'*was not one who had not a dame or damsel at his plate.*'
In Lancelot du Lac, a lady whom her jealous husband had compelled to dine in the kitchen, complains '*it is* '*very long since any knight has eaten on the same plate* '*with her.*'

Page 146, Line 18. '*Calm he persists to claim the* '*long-sought rein.*'

A more decisive proof will hardly be found than this '*long-sought rein*' affords, of the determination of a Trouveur to have an adventure at any rate. The enchanted mule seems to have no need of such furniture to guide him to the place of his destination; and the amusement it can be supposed to supply to either of the freakish sisters, is at least not very obvious to a reader of the eighteenth century.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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